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CYRIL THORNTON.

HAVE I NOT HEARD GREAT ORDNANCE IN THE FIELD,
AND HEAVEN'S ARTILLERY THUNDER IN THE SKIES ?
HAVE I NOT, IN A PITCHED BATTLE, HEARD
LOUD 'LARUMS, NEIGHING STEEDS, AND TRUMPETS CLANG ?
SHAKSPEARE.

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THE
YOUTH AND MANHOOD
OF
CYRIL THORNTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH;
AND T. CADELL, LONDON.
M.DCCC.XXVII.

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TO THE

HONOURABLE AND REVEREND

GEORGE BRIDGEMAN,

RECTOR OF WIGAN, LANCASHIRE,

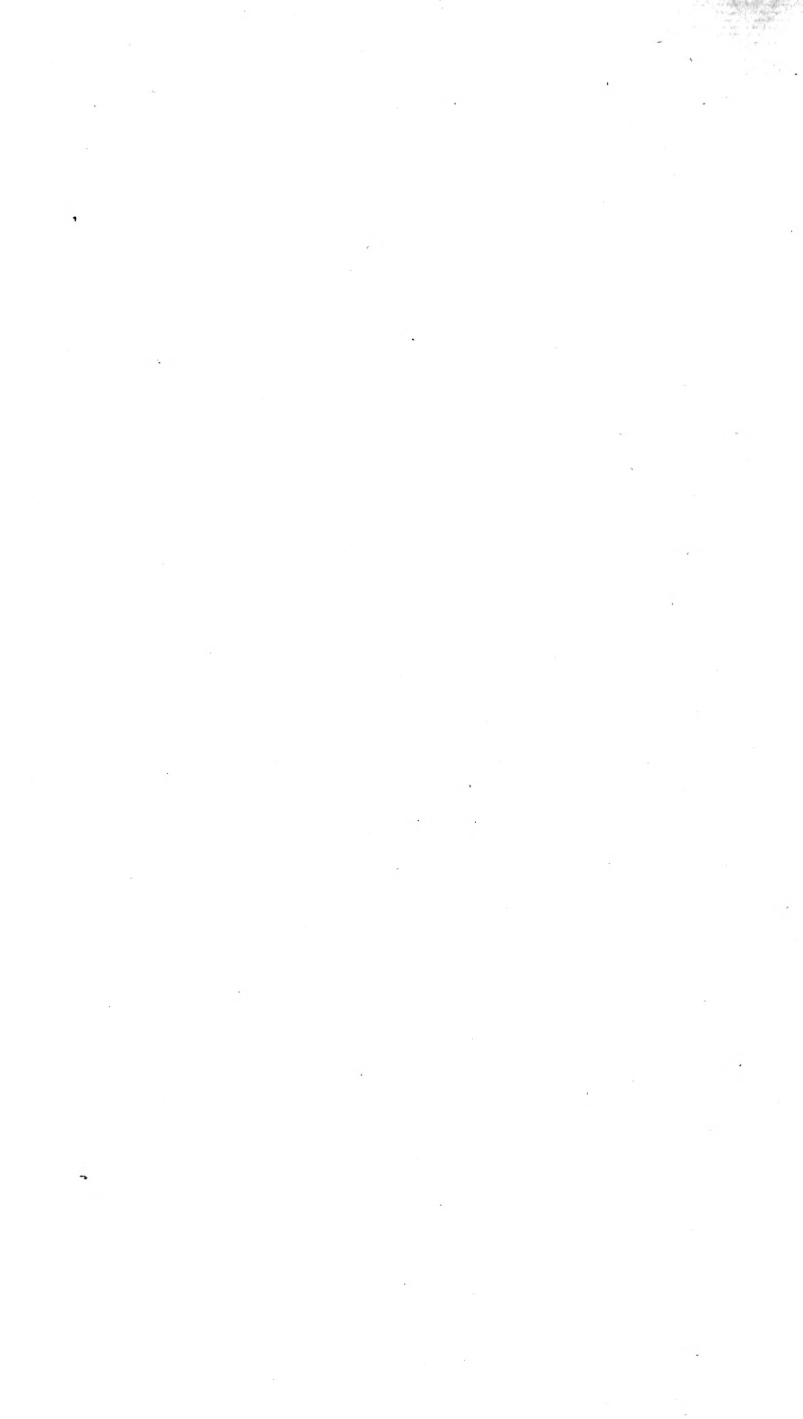
AND OF WESTON, SALOP,

IN TESTIMONY OF

SINCERE REGARD AND ESTEEM,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.



THE
YOUTH AND MANHOOD
OF
CYRIL THORNTON.

CHAPTER I.

—— The hopes
That were but in conception, now have birth,
And what was but idea till this day,
Hath put on essence.

Challenge for Beauty.

THE stock of which I have the honour to be a scion, is one of ancient descent and spotless blazon. Though untitled, its dignity had always been baronial; and the frequency with which the names of my ancestors occur in the county records, as filling offices of provincial trust and dignity, shows their influence to have

been considerable. While it is due to truth and my progenitors to state thus much, I am quite ready to confess that our family-tree has produced no very distinguished fruit. Its branches have never been pendent with the weight of poets, heroes, statesmen, or philosophers. "If they have writ our annals right," births, marriages, and deaths, the sale or purchase of land, the building of a house, or a donation to the parish church or county hospital, were generally the only events sufficiently salient, to afford footing even for the partial eloquence of a family historian. But if I have little reason to boast, I have certainly none to blush, for my ancestors. They were English gentlemen, fulfilling with propriety the duties of their situation, generally respectable in their relations to society, and leaving, when dead, nothing either "to point a moral, or adorn a tale."

My grandfather was a courtier and a man of expense. He married an earl's daughter, whose habits and tastes were even more expensive than his own, and engaged in several ruinous contests for the representation of the county. The natural consequences followed. Part of the

family estate was sold, heavy mortgages incurred on the remainder, and when, in the course of nature, the succession devolved on my father, he found himself in possession of little more than the wreck of a magnificent estate. Of my grandmother, who survived her husband many years, I have a distinct and vivid recollection. I remember a stately old lady, in an *oreille-d'ours*-coloured silk gown, with a pyramidal head-dress, an enamelled snuff-box in her hand, and a ponderous gold equipage at her girdle. I remember, too, the insidious delight taken both by my brother and myself in getting behind her chair, and tugging at the lace lap-pets, which depended from the apex of her coiffure. She died, and I was allowed to join in paying the last duties to her remains. The pomp and splendour with which the earthly tabernacle of my grandmother was restored to its kindred elements, made a prodigious impression on my young imagination. The hearse, in all its plumed and melancholy grandeur; the crimson velvet coffin, with its gilt escutcheons; the sable mutes, and the long and sombre procession, contributed to people my mind with

ideas to which till then it had been a stranger. There is something wild and shadowy in death to the imagination of a child. It is surrounded by a certain dim grandeur and awful solemnity, which perhaps his very ignorance of its nature, tends rather to increase than diminish. He reads in the countenances around him, that something of dread and terror has befallen them. He learns that a being, from infancy familiar to his eyes, and at whose approach, perhaps, they ever brightened, shall meet them no more—that he is gone to a far-distant land, from which he never will return. He knows this, and he knows, likewise, that this is *not all*. There is something still beyond, with which his understanding vainly strives to grapple. Death is an abstraction too pure for the comprehension of a child; and when, in the gradual dawning of his intellect, it becomes intelligible, he finds that the dispersion of the mist which obscured the summit of the mountain has added nothing to its splendour and sublimity. For myself, while the funeral pageant of my grandmother impressed me with feelings of respect for her when dead, of which when living I had been

far from betraying any symptoms, I likewise drew from it my first lesson of the transient nature of human glory, by observing how speedily she was forgotten.

My father was a man of retired habits and reserved manners. I have already stated, that, on the death of my grandfather, it had been found necessary to sell a large portion of the family estates. This was a severe blow to my father's pride, and one, I think, from which he never afterwards recovered. At no period of his life had his taste led him into expensive pursuits, nor had he launched into any expenditure unsuited to the liberal establishment, which the world considered it fitting for a person of his station and expectations to maintain. The portion of his fortune which still remained to him, was amply sufficient for the supply of all the comforts, and even elegancies of life; yet the dismemberment of his hereditary property was not the less severely felt by a person of his temperament, because it involved no curtailment of his own personal enjoyments. The wound rankled in his mind, and a change in his character was thenceforward visible to all. Before this

event, my father had been accustomed to move among the magnates of the land, with that due feeling of consequence and equality which belonged to his birth and fortune. He had entered life with the feelings of a high-born English gentleman, knowing his proper station in society, and neither betraying petty jealousy of his equals, nor kibing the heels of his superiors. It was now different. From the loss of property the loss of influence was inseparable. He was no longer selected as the foreman of grand juries, or the chairman of quarter sessions. His hall, at Michaelmas and Ladyday, was no longer crowded with the throng of tenants, who came to pay their rents, or solicit forbearance. "Like angel visits, few and far between," they now came singly in ; and though the steward still received them throned as formerly in his elbow-chair, and with all his former solemn courtesy, the life and bustle of the scene was gone ;—

" 'Twas Greece, but *living* Greece no more."

Poor Humphreys felt it to be so, and locked his slender receipts in his bureau, with an air of less consequence, than had sat well upon him in better and brighter days. And thou, too,

Jacob Pearson, thou paragon of butlers, thou best and worthiest of all the ministers of Bacchus ! thy occupation, too, was gone. Where were those volleys of corks, which, like the fire of hostile armies, came quick and frequent on the ear ? Where the gurgling and delightful sound of liberated liquor, full of sweet promise to the thirsty souls, who waited with bashful anxiety for thy approach ? Alas, it was no longer heard. Thy visage was as rubicund, thy paunch as portly, as in former days ; but where was the laughing sparkle of thine eye, thy ponderous alacrity of motion, the jest that circulated with the tankard, the hospitable jocularity that gave, like nutmeg, a racy flavour to its contents ? These, alas, were gone too. Since that sad period, thine eye has been dull, thy motions heavy, and the cork of thy wit has been undrawn.

It is not in all cases that the uses of adversity are sweet. In my father's they certainly were not so. He became irascible and morose, and jealous of those small attentions and trifling distinctions in society, to which birth affords, probably, the best claim, but to which wealth

is the surest passport. In attempting to conceal even from himself the mortifying fact, that he was now become a much less considerable person than formerly, he assumed an air of austerity in his own family, and of dogmatism in society. He refused the county hunt access to his fox-covers, became litigious about the extent of his manorial rights, cut the vicar for saluting him with a familiar nod, and succeeded in getting himself almost unanimously voted, both the worst neighbour, and the most disagreeable man, in the county. Henceforth my father's life was embittered by a series of difficulties and disappointments, petty indeed in their nature, but not on that account less galling to a mind so morbidly sensitive as his. He imagined himself slighted, and knew himself to be disliked. He was probably both ; but the cause was to be found, less in his change of circumstances than of character. At all events, there still remained attached to the family a sort of prescriptive influence and respect, which, like other prejudices, may decay slowly, but cannot be suddenly eradicated.

Of my mother I have not yet spoken : I would

now do so. She was the daughter of a dignitary of the church, and brought with her little accession either of blood or of fortune. But she brought what was better, and more valuable than these, an excellent understanding, and an affectionate heart. She had been a beauty in her youth, and, during two seasons which she spent at Bath with her father, her charms had been the object of general homage and admiration. Circumstances of which I have acquired a knowledge, induce me to believe that her marriage with my father had been one rather of prudence than of love. If this was so, it belied the common prediction with regard to such marriages, for the union was not an unhappy one. It was indeed impossible, I think, to know my mother in the intimate relations of domestic life, and not to love her. While her conduct as a wife and mother was truly exemplary, her cheerfulness and benevolence of disposition tended greatly to soothe and soften the inequalities, to which my father's spirits were habitually subject; and she threw around her an elegance and refinement, of which the whole establishment unconsciously partook. The fruit of

this union was two sons and two daughters. Of the former I was le cadet. My brother Charles was two years older, Jane one year younger than myself, and I was ten years old when little Lucy (for so I must still call her) was born, at a time when my mother's age rendered any further addition to her family extremely improbable. However, the little visitant was not the less cordially welcomed, on account of the unexpectedness of her arrival. She was the darling and the plaything of us all; and if any of the family were in danger of being spoiled by indulgence, it was little Lucy.—Dearest sister, how do thy infant beauties, and thy joyous frolics, mingle unbidden with the sadder memories of my youth! They run like silver threads through the woof of the dark tissue of my life. I look back on them as to a green and sunny spot, which perhaps shows brighter because seen through a long and darkened vista of intervening years. Read, Lucy, these Memoirs of your brother's life. You will find in them much of error, perhaps more of suffering; but from you, at least, he will meet pardon for the one, and for the other sympathy.

CHAPTER II.

They grew in beauty, side by side,
They fill'd one house with glee ;
Their graves are sever'd, far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.
The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow ;
She had each folded flower in sight—
Where are those dreamers now ?

F. HEMANS.

READER, if you have ever travelled from Av-
ington to Mountford, about a mile beyond the
village of Edgehill, near where the road to Spix-
ley branches off to the right, you may probably
have remarked an ancient, and rather vene-
rable-looking gate, the pillars of which are sur-
mounted by two rampant lions. The dexter of
these royal animals has suffered considerable
mutilation ; the effacing fingers of time, or vio-
lence, having deprived him of whatever per-
sonal decoration might have resulted from the
ornamental appendages of paws and tail. His
antagonist has been more fortunate, and still

retains one paw, with which he appears in the act of taking snuff; an indication of taste for the enjoyments of civilized life undoubtedly somewhat startling and anomalous. Be this as it may, the gate in question forms the entrance to an avenue about a mile long, winding gradually up a gentle acclivity, and flanked on either side by a row of lime-trees of uncommon luxuriance and beauty. In the distance, you may catch, as you advance, occasional glimpses of a house through the intervals of the trees, which is marked by its lofty peaked roof, and clustered chimneys, to belong to the era of Queen Elizabeth. You will not admire the building, but you will admire, I think, the situation in which it stands; the wooded hill that rises behind it, the mazy Severn, which flows a little to the right, the village church visible in the distance, and Cromar wood, that fills the left of the landscape, from which the cuckoo and ring-dove delight to send forth sweet music. This, reader, is Thornhill Manor, the spot where I was born, and where the intervening years of my infancy and youth flew rapidly away.

With the occurrences of those years I shall

not swell my narrative. The joys and sufferings of a child are too minute and evanescent to afford matter for the grave records of maturer years. Their shadowy remembrance is food for midnight dreams, but eludes the glare of waking noonday contemplation.

It had been the intention of my father to superintend the education of my brother and myself, a task for which his talents and acquirements well fitted him; but the unsettled state of his spirits, and the extreme mental depression to which he was occasionally subject, soon compelled him to resign the task. The charge of our education, therefore, was committed to Dr Lumley, the rector of a parish in a neighbouring county, between whom and my father there had subsisted an early friendship. They had been companions at college; and though, in after life, their intimacy had decreased, I believe they still did continue to entertain a mutual regard. At all events, my father was not unfortunate in his substitute. Dr Lumley was a good scholar, and an excellent man; and whatever deficiency of early acquirement I have had since occasion to lament, is attributable not

to the fault of the master, but the negligence of the pupil. The Doctor had a son, whose age nearly coincided with that of Charles. William Lumley was a young man of a quiet and studious disposition, ardent in his pursuit of learning, but taking little pleasure in those active recreations, which, to persons of his age, are generally so attractive. This was perhaps a favourable circumstance for Charles. The superior advancement of Lumley excited his emulation, and called into action those new energies and exertions, which were necessary to prevent his being distanced in the race by so formidable a competitor. We were not the only pupils whom Dr Lumley admitted into his family. No. There was Jack Spencer, the best-natured and giddiest of God's creatures, now known as one of the best officers of the navy. There, too, was Dick Sutton, with his round and stupid face, and look of self-satisfied dulness. He began Latin with a fair wind, got through his accidence with flying colours, but ran a-ground at "*propria quæ maribus.*" There he stuck. Human exertion could get him no further, and further he never went, I'll answer for it, till this hour.

Dick is now one of the most popular of our parliamentary orators, a ponderous debater on matters of finance, eloquent on Catholic Emancipation, and overpowering on the Corn Laws.

For myself, I was not a dunce, but I found little pleasure in study. My energies were only fully excited by athletic exercises, and the sports of the field. In leaping, running, and vaulting, I had no competitors. In horsemanship my supremacy was disputed ; and, to settle our rival claims to superiority, we rode steeple chases on our ponies, and though these generally ended in the bouleversement of both horses and riders, it is to these early trials of nerve and prowess that I owe the skill and confidence as an equestrian, from which I have in after life derived much pleasure and advantage.

There was too a pack of harriers in the neighbourhood, with which, on holidays, we were suffered to hunt. How our hearts bounded at the cry of the huntsman, and the music of the dogs ! the trumpets of the seraphim would to our ears have sounded less sweet : there was a halo around us, a glory on earth and in the sky. After all, how vulgar and miserable is the

intoxication of the bottle, when compared with that of the hunting-field ! How perfect is the concentration of soul—of all energies, both mental and physical—of heart and purpose, in the all-absorbing pursuit ! Hunting is your true leveller. In the field, all distinctions of youth and age, of rank and fortune, are forgotten. The old man feels the blood of youth once more dancing in his veins ; the boy anticipates the slow progress of nature, and at once swells into a man.

In such scenes and occupations years passed away. Charles was now sixteen, and my father determined to send him to the University. He had always been his favourite son, and, independently of his claims as the future head of the family, destined to bear its honours, and transmit them to posterity, his qualities were fully sufficient to justify such a preference. Charles was indeed a universal favourite. I have known, I think, young men of greater talent, and of equal goodness of heart, but I have never known any upon whom nature had so visibly stamped the signet of kindness and benevolence ; in whom vivacity of

temper was so perfectly amalgamated with gentleness of disposition. The attachment which had subsisted between Charles and myself, was strong as the love between brothers ever was or can be. With me, he had never attempted to assume the privilege or authority of an elder brother. We had associated as friends and equals, yet his maturer mind had not failed to exercise its natural influence in guiding and directing mine. We had never been divided, but

“ Still had slept together,
Rose at one instant, learn'd, play'd, ate together,
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,
Still we went coupled and inseparable.”

In my character and disposition there was but little similitude to his. I was not, like Charles, the idol of my companions; and while every eye brightened at his approach, I felt that mine was regarded with indifference. I had not, like him, the innate and spontaneous power to conciliate attachment; and, in the little circle of my playmates, I knew that my absence occasioned no regret, my presence no joy. But these wide differences of character did not in any degree diminish our attachment, and we had grown

together, in sun and shower, like two young trees intertwining their branches, and ignorant of the support they mutually afforded, until one has been suddenly removed.

The current of my life had hitherto glided on smooth and unruffled, and the separation from Charles, which was now about to take place, was the first sorrow of my youthful and happy heart. William Lumley, too, was going to the University, and in a month, he and Charles were to set out together. They were attached to each other, and rejoiced in the knowledge, that in the new and busy scene, in which they were about to mingle, they would not cease to be companions.

Dr Lumley's reports of my application and advancement, I imagine, had not been very favourable. I manifested, on all occasions, the strongest predilection for a military life, and entreated Dr Lumley to make my wishes on this subject known to my father. Never shall I forget the glowing interest with which I read the history of the campaigns of the Great Gustavus, Prince Eugene, and Lord Peterborough. I followed the course of their armies on the map ; I

drew plans of the battles, and modelled little fortresses, on the principles of Vauban.

In a town about twenty miles distant, I had accidentally heard that a review of the troops of the district was to take place. With what deep, but silent anxiety, did I expect the appointed day! I was too apprehensive of being prevented from gratifying my curiosity, to communicate my intentions to any one. At length the day came, and the dawn of morning found me mounted on my horse, and proceeding, with a beating heart, to the scene of action. It may be conceived what effect the imposing spectacle of pomp and parade, which I there witnessed, was likely to produce on my excited spirit. It added fuel to the flame that already burned within me, and what Lord Peterborough and Gustavus had begun, the spectacle of this review completed.

My father, however, was not disposed to offer any vehement objection to my entering on a military life. His own views with regard to me had been directed to the bar; but finding I was neither suited, by character or inclination, for that profession, it was determined I should become a soldier, and that the two years which

were to intervene before my obtaining a commission, should be spent in preparatory studies at the Military Academy at Marlow. When Charles, therefore, quitted Doctor Lumley's, I also returned to Thornhill, where it had been arranged that I should remain a few months, after his departure for the University. On taking our leave of the worthy Doctor, "we shed some natural tears, but wiped them soon." In that moment, we even loved Mrs Lumley, and received her parting benediction with softened hearts, and an oblivion of all the petty annoyances, of which the over-anxiety of that worthy lady with regard to our outward elegance of deportment, had sometimes been the cause.

Warm welcome awaited us at Thornhill. The old Lions seemed to regard us with looks of peculiar benignity as we passed the gate, where our sisters were waiting our arrival. Jane locked her arms in ours as we walked onward to the house, and little Lucy bounded by our side, with a heart full of buoyancy and glee.

No fountain, from its native cave,
E'er tripp'd with foot so free ;
She was as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea."

CHAPTER III.

M. Will you follow ?

Hel. Even where fate leads me—we are all her slaves,
And have no dwellings of our own.

M. Yes—graves.

Royal King and Loyal Subject.

THE period of Charles's departure for College now rapidly approached, and nothing else could be talked or thought of in the family. All hands were busy, and everything around gave note of preparation. My mother was engaged in issuing, and the housekeeper in executing, orders for a copious supply of every imaginable comfort; Jane, in marking his linen with her own hair, and making little keep-sakes, that might recall her often to his memory. Even little Lucy would not be idle, and might be seen seated with unwonted gravity, assiduously employed in hemming his pocket-handkerchiefs. By my father he had been summoned to two long audiences in the library, and had been furnished with

suitable directions and advice, for his guidance in the new circumstances of the life on which he was about to enter. For myself, I haunted him like his shadow. We rode and walked together, talked of our little griefs and glowing hopes, and bound ourselves by solemn promise to maintain a frequent and regular correspondence.

There was heaviness in every heart, but most of all in mine. It was now October, and Charles was to return home, for the summer vacation, in June. The very days were counted, and the length of his absence computed to an hour; but I would then be gone, and years might elapse before we again embraced in brotherhood and love. Our separation seemed long and limitless, for to a boy the future is an eternity, the past a point.

Thus did all things go on, until the day preceding that fixed for his departure. There is nothing in that day that is not burned deeply and indelibly on my memory. The morning dawned in clouds. Volumes of deep red vapour obscured the rising of the sun, and seemed to presage a day of rain and storm; but at ten

o'clock they began to disperse, and before the sun had attained his meridian, the sky was clear, and he shone forth in all his summer brightness and glory.

After discussing several plans of amusement for the day, it was at length agreed by Charles and myself that we should take our guns, and ramble out into the fields, less for the sake of killing game, than to enjoy each other's society once more, on the eve of so long a separation as that which impended over us. It was not without difficulty that I obtained Charles's consent to this project. My father had always been peculiarly apprehensive of accidents from loaded fire-arms, and was peremptory in his injunctions that we should never join the same shooting party, though he had no objections to our singly accompanying the keeper. But on this occasion we could not bear to be divided, and I prevailed on Charles to consent on that morning to the first deliberate breach of our father's commands. Bitter indeed were the fruits of our disobedience, and deeply has it been atoned for by both.

Our intentions were, of course, kept secret, and we did not summon the keeper to attend us,

but sallied forth alone, conversing, as we went, of the thoughts by which our hearts were stirred, and the hopes that shed a radiance on the future.

Thus had an hour or two passed on. We had fired several shots, but this occasioned little interruption to our colloquy. The dogs again pointed. With boyish eagerness I cocked my gun, and advanced towards the spot. It was necessary to pass a hedge. Charles leaped it, and I held his gun while he did so. I then returned it to him through the hedge, and was in the act of passing my own, which he waited to receive. It was cocked. His head was close to the muzzle—a twig caught the trigger—and the contents were lodged—in his brain.

He fell, but uttered no sound. For a moment I stood silent and motionless; then I called on Charles, and entreated him to answer me. All was silent. A dreadful presentiment of evil arose within me; and, unable longer to bear the torture of suspense, by a convulsive spring I leaped the hedge, and stood trembling beside him. He lay with his face on the ground, and there was blood on the grass. I called—I

shouted aloud for assistance, and uttered wild shrieks in the helplessness of my agony. A ray of hope that the wound might not be mortal, dawned for a moment on my heart. I knelt down beside him, and raised tenderly and softly his drooping head. Then hope gave place to despair, for, through the bloody clusters in his golden hair, I saw a frightful opening in his forehead, and I knew that death would not be cheated of his victim. There was still a gurgling in his throat, and a slight quivering in his limbs, that showed life was not yet extinct. His eyes were fixed and lustreless. O God ! how did the iron enter into my soul, as I gazed on them ! I threw myself on the ground beside him, bound his head with my handkerchief, and, supporting him in my arms, his head rested on my bosom. I kissed his livid lips and bloody cheeks, and talked to him wildly and fondly, and adjured him, by the blood of our Redeemer, to grant me some sign of his forgiveness. He died, and gave no sign. The pulsation of his heart became every moment feebler and less frequent, the convulsive action of the muscles gradually ceased, and my arms no long-

er embraced a living brother, but a cold and rigid corpse.

How long I remained in this situation I know not, for despair, like joy, takes no note of time ; but I imagine it must have been for some hours. The concentration of agony and horror contained in that brief space, might be diluted into centuries of ordinary misery.

At length I observed some labourers passing at a distance. I rose, and attempted to call them, but my throat was parched and powerless, and I could produce no sound. I made a signal, and they approached. What they saw spoke too plainly, to require from me an explanation, which I was incapable of giving. They procured a blanket at a neighbouring cottage, and bore the body towards Thornhill. I almost mechanically followed, and was only roused from my stupor by our approach to the house. At sight of that, I thought on the misery I had brought on its inmates, and of the horror with which I should be regarded there as my brother's murderer. Faces that till now had ever been lighted up with love, seemed to scowl on me with hatred ; and I imagined myself driven

forth, by those dear to me as my heart's-blood, with curses and execrations. Such ideas poured like a flood of fire upon my soul, and uttering a cry of torture, I fled into the neighbouring wood.

It was evening. The night set in dark and stormily, and with heavy rain. My garments were soon drenched; but I heeded it not, knew it not. I rushed into the middle of the wood, and cast myself on the ground. I attempted to pray, but I could not. I thought myself a thing accursed of God and man, a helpless and devoted castaway, without hope or refuge. Fiendish faces glared on me from behind the trees, and strange and terrible voices were borne on the wind. Then would the scene change, and I thought myself a thing heaving on the mountainous billows of the ocean, and that I sought for death amid the waters in vain, for I bore a charmed life, and could not die. This too passed away, and I lay in a loathsome pit, with creatures unutterably loathsome. There the toads spit upon me, and the lizards gazed on me with their sparkling eyes, and crawling things defiled me with their slime. Then peals of wild

and horrid laughter sounded in my ears, and I saw my brother's face all ghastly and grinning, and he called me murderer and fratricide. Worn out as I was I could not rest. There was a voice within, that cried for ever, On, on, and I could not but obey the behest. I plunged through the thickest parts of the underwood, and found a strange delight in being gored and lacerated by the thorns.

Such are the glimmerings which my memory affords me, of the sufferings of that fearful night. At length I thought myself dying. My limbs became gradually numb and stiff, and I drew breath with difficulty. In the expectation of death, my mind became calmer. There was consolation in the idea, that I should not survive the dreadful deed that I had done, and that, when my parents witnessed the terrible expiation of my crime, they would forgive—perhaps weep for me. I wished to die a penitent at my father's gate, and I made an effort to return to the house. More I know not. But I have since learned that I was found insensible in the morning, on the steps of the vestibule, with the countenance of death, and eyeballs red with blood.

Weeks passed away, of which I know and remember nothing. I had a brain fever. The struggle was a long and severe one ; and so trembling was the vibration of the balance between life and death, that a hair in either scale would have decided the preponderance.

At length I awoke as from a deep sleep. I gazed on the objects around me, but could recognise none of them, and I again closed my eyes, and endeavoured to arrange the confused multitude of ideas, that thronged tumultuously on my mind. By slow degrees I succeeded. I remembered as familiar things, the bed on which I lay, the furniture, the pictures, the distant spire seen through the window ; and I knew my mother, who sat watching by my pillow. She was dressed in the deepest mourning, and gazed on me with looks such as never beam but from a mother's eye. She had observed a change in the expression of my countenance, and hope, almost dead within her, revived once more to cheer and animate her heart. I looked on her long in silence. At length the words, " Oh, my dear mother," faltered from my lips, and I attempted to embrace her ; but the effort was too great

for me, and my arms dropped powerless by my side. She saw at once that my mind was restored. For a moment she seemed endeavouring to subdue her emotion; then she bent over me, and warm tears fell on my face as she pressed her quivering lips to mine, and I heard her breathe the words, "My poor boy, my Cyril; thank God, I have yet a son! thou, at least, art restored to me." I clasped my feeble arms around her neck, and joined my tears with hers. They were refreshing tears, and I was calmed and relieved by them. But my mother feared the effect of any strong agitation on my newly-awakened mind, and once more kissing me, she retired from the bed. Then I saw her kneel, and she prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to God, under whose terrible dispensations she had not been left utterly destitute and bereft.

CHAPTER IV.

There was a time, when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore.

WORDSWORTH.

My recovery was slow, and spring was fast verging into summer, before my returning strength enabled me to exchange the atmosphere of a sick chamber for the pure air of heaven. Those only who, like me, have lain for months on a sick-bed, and who, like me, have recovered at the moment when all nature seems simultaneously bursting into new life and activity, and wears her most beautiful and joyous aspect, can understand the feelings of delight which I experienced on my release from captivity. Then indeed there seemed

“A glory in the grass, and splendour in the flower,”

and the symphony of angel choirs could not have fallen more melodiously on my ear, than did the carolling of the birds in the greenwood. The minutest objects of Nature rose in my eyes into consequence and beauty. To me, in all her works, she was instinct with voice, and with them all I held sweet communing.

“ The daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes,
Or Cytherea’s beauty,”

had all deep hold on my affection ; and when, as the summer advanced, I saw them wither, I felt for them as friends of my bosom, and almost wept for their decay.

As I walked forth, my mother and sister, with anxious assiduity, supported my tottering steps, and guided them to the favourite haunts of my childhood. Little Lucy, too, would take my hand with infantine caresses, and lead me to her little flower-garden, to see the cowslips and anemones, and the nest which the green-linnet had built in her favourite rosebush. But I better loved to wander forth alone, amid the singing of birds and the blossoming of flowers, to yield

up my spirit to the pervading impulses around me, and in the lonely communion of my own thoughts, to add another voice to the general unison of nature. For I felt that "impulses of deeper birth" came to me in solitude, and I loved to gather

"The harvest of a quiet eye,
That broods and sleeps on his own heart."

My strength now rapidly returned, and I was soon able to mount my favourite horse, and thus to render my exercise more varied and continuous. But my mind by no means regained its healthful tone with equal rapidity. The bow had been so strongly bent as to injure its elasticity, and it could not speedily return to its natural curvature. The exhilarating influence, too, of external nature, gradually diminished as the objects became more familiar to my eye, and a mental torpor was gradually stealing over my faculties. The memory of Charles was too strongly connected with the scene around me. Everything was associated with his image; animate and inanimate nature were alike full of him. His idea would not pass away, and though my grief now was nei-

ther passionate nor vehement, it was becoming what was perhaps still worse, a deep and rooted sentiment, acting with permanent influence on my character.

It would have been well if the fatal consequences of my disobedience had been confined wholly to myself. But it was not so. In the shrunk form, the ashy cheek, and hollow eye of my mother, there might be read a dreadful tale of grief and suffering. Nor was it the less apparent that she strove to conceal it from every eye. She wished not to cloud the hearts of those she loved, by making them partakers in her sorrow. She smiled, but her smiles, though kind and benignant as ever, were no longer those of gladness. She ministered comfort to others, while it was but too visible that the canker-worm was gnawing at her own heart.

Jane's grief, too, was intense. But how transient is the cloud of sorrow on a youthful brow !

“ The tear down childhood's cheek that flows
Is like the dewdrop on the rose ;
When next the summer wind comes by,
And waves the bush, the flower is dry.”

And so was it with my sisters. The blow that at first stunned them with its violence, left on

their young and buoyant hearts no permanent marks, and in a few weeks a tender and softened memory was all they retained of their lost brother.

With my father it was different. Like a stroke of God's lightning had the blow descended on his head, and the consequences were at first terrible. He rolled in the dust—he grieved, and would not be comforted. Dreadful and agonizing were the pangs he suffered, till at length he lay exhausted by the intensity of his anguish,

“ And show'd no signs of life, save his limbs quivering.”

Then, in the bitterness of a wounded spirit, he uttered curses on the author of his bereavement. Oh, how witheringly did they fall on my mother's heart ! She knew that, till then, her cup of misery had not mantled to the brim. She knelt at his feet, and implored, vainly implored, him to recall the dreadful words. Then she told him, what as yet he knew not, of my danger, of my madness. In the agony of her despair, she brought him to my bed. My father heard there the sounds of suffering and delirium that burst from me, and he gazed on my fiery

eyeballs and haggard countenance. Then only it was, that he recalled the dreadful curse he had invoked, and with a penitent and softened heart, bedewed my temples with his tears.

Yet I believe he never perfectly forgave me. On my recovery, his manner towards me was kind, and unmarked by any of that austerity to which I had been accustomed. He studiously avoided any recollection which might disturb that mental tranquillity, so essential to the complete restoration of my health. Still there was ever about him something of coldness and constraint, that told me I could never more be the object of his love. I knew and felt this. My mother, with affectionate earnestness, endeavoured to combat this growing dislike, and to turn the current of his affection into its natural channel. Never surely was there a warmer or more impassioned advocate. She directed his view to all that was good and praiseworthy in my character, and enlarged on those qualities and talents, which appeared to her partial eyes to give large promise of future distinction. But in vain. There was a barrier that could not be surmounted, and the place

which Charles had filled in my father's heart was destined to remain for ever in abeyance.

In order to dissipate my dejection, my father wrote to request that William Lumley would pay us a visit. He came, and his presence had a temporary effect in raising my spirits. It was much to have a friend to whom I could unburden my heart, and talk of Charles. He, too, had loved him; we mingled our tears together, and I felt that grief loses half its bitterness by participation. But his stay was necessarily short. He was obliged to return to College; and on his departure, my mother feared that I should once more relapse into my former depression. I was therefore encouraged to mingle in society, and to visit those families in the neighbourhood where I might meet companions of my own age. This, too, was done, and Jane and I spent, as I remember, a fortnight at Sir John Willoughby's. Sir John was member for the county, and resided about ten miles from Thornhill. Lady Willoughby and my mother had contracted a friendship in early life, which, exceeding the ordinary duration of female friendships, continued unabated till the close of theirs.

To this circumstance it may perhaps be attributed, that, while my father had become generally unpopular in the county, no cessation of the friendly intercourse of the families had taken place. Sir John's only son, Frank Willoughby, was a young man rather above my own age, of high animal spirits and kind heart. I had always felt towards him a strong regard, probably because he was the only one of all our acquaintance who had betrayed a preference for my society over that of Charles. I condemned his taste, and yet I loved him for it. To cure me of my melancholy, the society of Frank did much, but the bright eyes of his sister Laura more. She was a pretty and elegant girl, about two years younger than myself, with bright blue eyes, and I thought the sweetest smile in the world. I had known her from childhood, for she had often visited my sisters at Thornhill ; but it was then for the first time that her charms burst upon me, and I felt emotion in beholding them. Then I think it was, that the first glimmerings of love dawned in my bosom, and I made my purest and earliest offering at the shrine of beauty. Certain it is, that her image dwelt with me during an

absence of several years, unconnected, it is true, with any passionate attachment, but still the object of fond and pleasing recollection.

The benefit which I derived from my visit at Middlethorpe was too obvious to escape notice at home, and the family physician recommended that I should quit Thornhill for a longer period. I accordingly received one morning, soon after my return, a summons from my father to attend him in the library, where he communicated in due form his intention of sending me without delay to the University of Glasgow. Of such a seminary I had at that time never heard, and as this resolution may perhaps excite in my readers as much surprise as it did in me, I shall state, briefly as possible, the reasons which I believe to have led to its adoption. In the first place, I was just fifteen, and that was considered too early an age to enter at either of the English Universities. In the next place, two sons of Lord ———, a friend of my father, had been for several years at Glasgow, and Lord ———, for whose judgment my father entertained great deference, was warm in his praises of the advantages they had derived from their

course of study in that learned seminary. My father, too, when abroad, had formed an acquaintance with Professor R——, then tutor to a distinguished nobleman, and had been impressed with a very favourable opinion of his talents and character. But there was another cause, which had probably a greater influence on his decision than either or all of those already mentioned, and which, from its important bearing on this narrative, will require to be elucidated at somewhat greater detail.

In the cursory notice I have already given of the family of my mother, I did not think it necessary to state that my grandmother was of Scottish origin. Such, however, was the fact. That lady was a daughter of Spreull of Balmalloch, in Dumbartonshire, a family well known in that county, though it is probable that its fame has not much extended beyond it. Several generations back, the head of this distinguished house had possessed barely property enough to entitle him to the rank and precedence of a *Cock Laird*. By the parsimony of its possessors, however, the estate had gradually increased. It was to this hereditary quality, in-

deed, that the Spreulls owed their elevation from the rank of humble cottars to that of bein and comfortable lairds ; and could the skulls of the successive owners of Balmalloch be submitted to the inspection of Mr Combe or Dr Poole, they would either discover in them an uncommon development of the organs of Caution and Covetiveness, or Phrenology would at once be overthrown. At all events, the estate throve apace in their hands ; and by small additions of a “ park ” on this side, and a “ pendicle ” on that, which the necessities of their less prudent neighbours induced them to dispose of, it gradually rose to be an estate of some note in the county, and the family of Spreull were suffered to mingle with others of older standing and baronial rank. Thus did matters stand, when my grandfather, a captain of dragoons, who served in Scotland somewhere about the middle of last century, married the blooming Miss Rebecca, or, as she was more commonly called, Miss Becky Spreull. This lady had two brothers, one of whom succeeded to the paternal property, and the other, having too much spirit to remain at home in the contemned and subordi-

nate capacity of "Jock, the laird's brother," was sent forth with very trifling advantages to "push his fortune" in the world. With this view the old laird procured him admission into the office of Sandy Swanston in Glasgow, a douce and cosie trader, who united, as was common in those days, the business of a wholesale importer of sugar and tobacco, with the profits of dealing in the same articles by retail. In this situation, did David Spreull succeed in rendering himself both useful and agreeable to his employer, and in a few years it became only necessary that he should advance a small capital, to procure a very advantageous share in the business. His father was now dead, and he was naturally led to solicit this accommodation from his brother the laird. The application was an unsuccessful one. The laird was married, and had a family to provide for, and rather unceremoniously informed his brother, in reply to his request, that he had other uses for his money, and "devil a bawbee" he need ever expect from him. The resentment excited in my grand-uncle David by this truly fraternal epistle, was naturally very strong, and put a

stop to all intercourse between the brothers. In this state did matters remain for many years, without advances on either side.

At length, however, the reputation of David's wealth penetrated even to Balmalloch, and the laird thought it prudent and advisable to effect, if possible, a reconciliation. But all such attempts failed. David Spreull was immovable; and now when, as he said himself, he was "well to do in the world," he would never forget nor forgive the unbrotherly and unchristian manner in which he had been treated in the time of his necessity. Even the grouse, and the red-deer hams, the flitches, and the salt-butter, which he annually received from Balmalloch, effected no mitigation of his resentment. He received them indeed, but with expressions of his contempt and dislike for the givers, returned no thanks, and burned the epistles by which they were generally accompanied, unread. With his sister, my grandmother, he had maintained an occasional correspondence, and on her death, he had written to my mother, a letter of affectionate condolence. His commercial transactions were now very widely extended, and the accounts of

his wealth, and of his estrangement from his brother and his family, were naturally considered very interesting intelligence at Thornhill. Any advances from so important a person were, of course, "to be gratefully received, and thankfully acknowledged." His letters were answered with profuse assurances of regard, and expressions of anxious hope, that, some time or other, he might be induced to visit Thornhill, where every heart was prepared to afford him a warm and cordial welcome. Such, at least, is the general style of letters to rich old bachelors from aspirant legatees, and to this I have no reason to suppose, that those in question formed any exception. At all events, they were not without effect. A passenger and his luggage were one day deposited by the London mail at the ancient gate I have already commemorated, and this passenger was no other than my uncle David. He spent a week with us. I was then about four years old, and recollect something of an elderly gruff-looking personage, who dandled me on his knee, and spoke in a dialect which I could not understand. The impression he left on the family, was that of his being a very sin-

gular and eccentric character. Among other oddities, I have heard it narrated, that he sadly puzzled old Pearson, the butler, by calling for a glass of Glenlivet; and fairly posed my father after dinner, by expressing a wish to be indulged with a bowl of toddy, a liquor, *eo nomine* at least, not familiar to any member of the establishment.

Between our family and that of Balmalloch, little or no intercourse had been maintained, and that little had been confined to a formal notification of births, marriages, and deaths, perhaps occasionally garnished with a few of those cheap expressions of civility, which mean, and which are intended to mean, nothing.

After reading this long preliminary statement, it will probably be seen, that the resolution of sending me to Glasgow, was the effect of a more recondite policy than might at first have been apparent. On my part, the business of preparation went merrily on. I was chiefly occupied in making arrangements for the comfortable provision, during my absence, of my horses and dogs. By my father, I was particularly enjoined to fail in no demonstration of respect and

regard towards my uncle, and to have recourse, on all proper occasions, to his experience and advice. Many cautions, too, did I receive on the score of extravagance ; and, ignorant as I then was, either of the value or necessity of money, I promised, without regret or scruple, that my expenses should be confined within the narrowest limits my father might impose. At length, all was finished ; and duly furnished with letters to my uncle and Professor R——, in whose family I was to become an inmate, I took a mournful and affectionate leave of my family ; and, attended by a steady servant, stepped into the north mail, and on the third morning from my departure, found myself safely arrived at the place of my destination.

CHAPTER V.

—— I'll view the manners of the town,
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,
And wander up and down to view the city.

Comedy of Errors.

“AND this,” said I to myself, as I gazed from the window of my inn, on the crowd and bustle in the street below—“this is Glasgow!—this the chosen seat of Science and the Muses—this the academic quiet, in which the mind of youth is to be nursed in the calm abstractions of Philosophy!” There was, indeed, rather a ludicrous contrast between the ideas I had conjured up, and the scene before me; and I could scarcely regard it without smiling. In the centre of the street, waggons, loaded with merchandize of different sorts, passed without intermission: and on the trottoirs, two opposing torrents of passengers were pouring along with extreme rapidity, and with looks full of anxiety and business.

Of these some would occasionally stop for a moment's conversation, on which a loud and vulgar laugh mingled anon with the prevailing dissonance, and added unnecessarily to the general cacophony. Their gait and gestures, too, were singularly awkward and ungainly, and differed not only in degree, but in character, from anything I had before seen.

In the crowd before me, the actors seemed rigidly to adhere to the directions given by Plautus, for clearing a passage through a street encumbered by a population inconveniently dense.

“ *Plenissime eos, qui adversum eunt, aspellito,
Detrude, deturba in viam : hæc hic disciplina pessima 'st.
Currenti, properanti, haud quisquam dignum habet decedere.
Ita tres simitu' res agendæ sunt, quando unam occeperis :
Et currendum, et pugnandum, et jurgandum est in via.*”

Merc. Act I. s. 2.

The scene, however, had at least the charm of novelty ; and the spirit and animation which pervaded it, were sufficient to invest it with interest in my eyes. I had indulged some time in contemplation before my attention was recalled to the business of the day. My first step was to remove to the house of Professor R—— ; and with this view I ordered the waiter to pro-

cure a hackney-coach. This, however, I discovered was a luxury of which Glasgow did not boast ; and dispatching my servant with the porters and baggage, I resolved leisurely to explore my way on foot. Having received from my landlady, a person of very portly dimensions, all requisite information with regard to the geography of the University, I set forth on my walk. For the first time in my life did I now mingle in the tumult of a great city. It is true I had been in London ; but I was then a child ; and when pent up in a carriage, and whirled rapidly through the streets, I felt myself an isolated thing, and formed no unit in the busy crowd around me. It was not, therefore, without some degree of mental excitement, that I now for the first time mingled in the throng, and threaded the devious mazes of the living labyrinth, in which I found myself involved. Every sense was alive to the demonstrations of industry and activity, which presented themselves on all sides ; and the clink of hammers, and loud creaking of machinery, mixing with the busy hum of men, formed a strange amalga-

tion of sound to ears like mine, hitherto accustomed only to the voice of simple nature.

At length, the appearance of an ancient and venerable building, informed me that I stood in presence of the University. There is certainly something fine and imposing in its proud and massive front. It seems to stand forth in aged dignity, the last and only bulwark of science and literature, among a population by whom science is regarded but as a source of profit, and literature despised. On passing the outer gate, I entered a small quadrangle, which, though undistinguished by any remarkable architectural beauty, yet harmonized well, in its air of Gothic antiquity, with the general character of the place. This led to another of larger dimensions, of features not dissimilar; and having crossed this, a turn to the left brought me to a third, of more modern construction, which was entirely appropriated to the residence of the Professors. There was something fine and impressive in the sudden transition from the din and bustle of the streets which surround it, to the stillness and the calm which reign within the time-hallowed precincts of the University. I seemed at once to

breathe another and a purer atmosphere; and I thought in my youthful enthusiasm, that here I could cast off the coil of the world and its contemptible realities, and yield up my spirit to the lore of past ages, where I saw nothing round me to intrude the idea of the present.

When I arrived, Professor R. was at home, and received me in his library. He was a person about sixty years of age, in a periwig of rather ancient construction, and dressed in a silk robe de chambre, which, from its texture and grotesque pattern, appeared to be of foreign manufacture. With the easy manners of a finished gentleman, he led me into conversation, probed insensibly the extent of my acquirements, and sketched for me the plan of study which he thought it advisable for me to pursue. The term or session of the College, he told me, had not yet commenced, and recommended my devoting the intervening period, to previous preparation with a private tutor. Having arranged these preliminaries, and taken possession of my apartments, I next turned my thoughts to my uncle, and finding that the Professor perfectly agreed in the propriety of my waiting on

him without delay, I once more set forth in search of his habitation. The discovery was attended with little difficulty, for his name and his dwelling were familiar to all from whom I requested information ; and I had only to answer the question, " Is't his house or his countin'-house ye're axin' for," to have my steps immediately directed in the proper channel. The domicile of Mr Spreull was situated in one of the great thoroughfares of the city, and was approached by a stair, which, being the common property of all the tenants of the same mansion, was, as might naturally be expected, offensively dirty.

My appeal to the door-bell was answered by a female servant, without covering to foot or leg, and in other respects not very nice in her person, who testified, by a broad stare, that the apparition of a morning visitor was by no means regarded as a common occurrence by the establishment. My English accent and her Scotch one, did not contribute to make us mutually intelligible, and when, to my inquiry, " if Mr Spreull was at home," she answered, " What's your wull?" I felt rather at a loss to understand

whether this periphrasis involved a negative or an affirmative. My question therefore was again repeated, and I at length succeeded in eliciting the equally laconic, but more intelligible response, "He's no in." Considering any further colloquy with this damsel to be useless, I was about to withdraw, when a brisk and bustling matron came forward, exclaiming as she advanced, "Gang ben, ye tawpy, and let me speak to the gentleman." I afforded her the opportunity she desired, by stating that I called in the hope of finding Mr Spreull. "I ettle ye're a stranger here, sir, or ye wad, nae doubt, ha'e kent it was no very likely that Mr Spreull wad be at hame at this time o' day."

"If Mr Spreull is at present abroad, will you be good enough to inform me at what time I shall be likely to find him at home?"

"It wants," said she, glancing her eye at a venerable-looking clock that stood ticking in the passage, "it wants fully twa hours o' his dinner-time; he'll no be at hame afore then; and when he does come hame," added she significantly, "he doesna like to be disturbit. But if ye'll just step to the counting-house, ye'll be sure to find

him there, if he's no upon the Change; and,' added she, again looking at the clock, "it's no likely he'll be there at this time o' day."

I thanked the good dame for her information; but considering the alternative of his being upon Change when I called at the counting-house as at least possible, I requested her to mention, on his return, that his nephew Cyril Thornton had called to pay his respects, and deliver personally a letter from his mother.

"An' are ye Maister Ceeral Thornton," exclaimed she, "the young gentleman my maister expecks to come down frae England? Troth, had I been ordinar kenspeckle, I might ha'e gathered as muckle frae yer English tongue, forbye yer likeness to the faimily. Surely I was beglamoured a' thegither, no to ha'e kent ye at yince. Will ye no step ben, and rest ye a bit? Weel I wat, my maister will be glad to see you."

I courteously declined the hospitable invitation of the worthy matron, alleging as an excuse, my intention of proceeding immediately in search of my uncle; and wishing her a good morning, I again set forward with that purpose.

Mr Spreull's counting-house was in the Tron-

gate, and formed part of a large tenement which he had originally built, and which, from this circumstance, was generally known by the patronymic of "Spreull's Land."

Of this building, however, he occupied but a small portion, the rest being divided among a very numerous body of tenants, as appeared by the variety of printed names with which both sides of the outer entrance were adorned. Among these the following notice, painted in large yellow letters, on a black ground, made no undistinguished figure—"David Spreull & Co., first door right hand." I advanced in the direction indicated, and entered a chamber where about a dozen clerks appeared very diligently engaged in business. In answer to my inquiries, I was informed, that there was at that moment a gentleman with Mr Spreull, but that it was not probable the interview would last long, and he would, in a minute or two, be at liberty to receive me. The anticipations of the clerk were correct, for I had not kept my station above the time indicated, before a person passed me from an inner apartment, and immediately afterwards I heard the following directions issued in a loud

and harsh voice, from within :—" Fergus, enter a sale of the fifty hoggits of muscovado sugar, marked L. T. by the Mary Jane, to MacVicar, MacFarlane, and MacNab, at ninety-four, two months and two months." I was now desired to " walk ben," and, doing so, found myself at once in the presence of my uncle.

He was engaged in writing, and did not at first look up. I had thus an opportunity afforded me of examining his person, which I did with no small curiosity. He was a man whose age it was not easy to determine from his appearance. Judging from his grey hair and wrinkled forehead, I had set him down at seventy-five, but when he turned upon me his quick and penetrating eye, I felt inclined to admit that he *might* be ten years younger. He was certainly a hale man, and bore about him no mark of decrepitude. The features of his face were coarse, and his nose, in particular, far transcended, both in length and diameter, the ordinary and vulgar limits of nasal protuberance. His countenance was strongly marked throughout by shrewdness and intelligence, and the curvature of his upper lip, and an habitual

contraction of the eye-brows, gave indication of a temper at once irascible and pertinacious. Such at least were the conclusions I had come to, when my observations were suddenly cut short by their object, who, regarding me with a cursory and careless glance, thus addressed me : “ Oh, you’re from Mr Mucklehose. Just tell him from me, that I cannot agree to a total loss in the case o’ the Hercules. There’s a claim o’ salvage, and nae mair. I told him sae yesterday at the coffee-room, and there’s nae use in his bothering me with messages about the matter. My mind’s made up.—Good morning to you.”

Having said this, he once more resumed his writing ; and I remained silent for a minute or two, partly from surprise at being thus addressed, and partly in the hope that a second glance might correct the error into which he had fallen with regard to my character and business. Of this, however, there seemed little prospect. He appeared utterly insensible of my presence, and I at length determined to make myself known to him without further delay.

“ Sir, you mistake. I——”

“What the deevil, sir, are you there yet?” exclaimed the old gentleman, his eye kindling with passion—“I mistake, do I? Baldy Mucklehose will find, however, the mistake lies wi’ him, if he thinks the Glasgow underwriters are to accept a total loss, for what, at Lloyd’s, is considered only a case o’ salvage.”

“Permit me, sir, to inform you——”

“No, sir, I want none of your information. You can inform me of nothing in the business, that I do not know better than either yourself or your employer. So, be good enough to stop your thrapple, and steek the door ahint you. I’ve other use for my time than to stand argol-bargoling wi’ you.”

So saying, he again commenced writing, and I could scarce refrain from laughing at the ridiculous position in which I was placed. Perceiving all the difficulties which opposed themselves to a verbal explanation, I determined to bring about an *eclaircissement* by the delivery of my mother’s letter. He received it in silence, and, having glanced over its contents, hastily rose and advanced towards me, extended a huge hard and bony hand, and, grasping mine, administered a shake, which, in the length of its

duration, and the vehemence of its pressure, gave evidence of a cordial welcome. “Ye’re welcome to Glasgow, Mr Cyril—I’m happy, very happy, to see you. Ye’ve grown a braw big callant since I saw you last, that’s now ten years past at Martinmas; but you’ll no mind me, for you was then just a wee bit toddlin’ thing, wi’ great red cheeks, and twa wee shining een glaikin’ out ower them. To an old man like me, Mr Cyril, ten years are no just sae lang as they are to you; and it seems almost like yesterday that I dandled you on my knee. But I maunna forget to speir after your lady-mother; I hope she’s keeping stout, and no suffering mair than we maun a’ expect to do as we advance in years.”

The old gentleman still kept my hand pressed in his while he uttered this kind and voluble address, yet it was done with the same unbending rigidity of feature, which had struck me on my first entering the apartment. His face had apparently been modelled into one expression, by the unvaried and habitual action through life of one dominant feeling and excitement, till it had lost the power of change, and, like sculp-

tured stone, the look once impressed on it was to be for ever ineffaceable. But though my grim-visaged uncle possessed not the power of smoothing his wrinkled front, or of relaxing at will the hard contraction of his facial muscles, still there might be discovered, in the milder and more softened expression of his eye, indication of warm and kindly feeling. It required some time to answer all his inquiries with respect to my family, but having done so, he proceeded.

“ So ye’ve come down here to be a colleeginer. It’s a lang gait to gang for learning. But after a’, I am no sure that you could ha’e done better. Our Colleges here are no bund down like yours in the south by a wheen auld and fizzionless rules, and we dinna say to ilka student, either bring three hundred pounds in your pouch, or gang about your business. We dinna lock the door o’ learning, as they do at Oxford, and Cambridge, and shut out a’ that canna bring a gouden key in their hand, but keep it on the sneck, that onybody that likes may open it. But where are ye gaun to bide ?”

“ With Professor R——, at the College.”

“ Weel, from all I ken myself or have heard tell o’ him, he’s a douce and discreet person ; and your father hasna chosen amiss. It’s no very often that we forgather, but he’s a weel-faured and pleesant man, without muckle o’ the Dominie about him ; at ony rate, he’s far afore that heavy tike, Professor ———, wha’s little better than a haveril, and has stocked his mind so extraordinar weel wi’ science and philosophy, that he has no room left in’t for common sense. And there’s Principal ———, I never heard a screed o’ a sermon frae him that was worth a button, and he’s nae mair fit to haud the candle to Dr Balfour or Dr Porteous——”

Here our colloquy was interrupted by the entrance of a person with a face full of business, who, pulling out of a huge coat-pocket several samples of cotton and tobacco, began a conversation in which I could be expected to take neither interest nor participation. Mr Spreull took advantage of the first pause in the dialogue to turn to me, and said, “ It’s no often, God knows, that I meet friends, no to say relations, and it would be a slighting o’ his mercies no to be kind to them when I do sae ;

but you're auld enough to ken, Mr Cyril, that business must be attended to. So I'll let you gang now, gin you'll promise to tak pat-luck wi' me the day. You'll get poor fare, but if I hae got a right inkling o' your heart, blood's thicker there than water, and you'll put up for one day with a bad dinner and an auld man's cracks."

Though this invitation, like many other passages of the preceding conversation, was at that time by no means superfluously intelligible, yet I contrived to pick up the drift of it, and answered by a ready acceptance. I then took my departure, having arranged that I should call on my uncle at his place of business precisely at a quarter to four o'clock, and accompany him to his house.

CHAPTER VI.

He was not taken well ; he had not dined :
 The veins unfill'd, the blood is cold, and then
 We pout upon the morning, are unapt
 To give or to forgive ; but when we have stuff'd
 These pipes, and these conveyances of our blood,
 With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls,
 Than in our priest-like fast.

Coriolanus.

Qu. Troth, he uses his uncle discourteously now. Can he tell what I may do for him ? He knows my humour : I am not so usually good ; 'tis no small thing that draws kindness from me ; he may know that an he will.

A Trick to catch the Old One.

BEFORE returning to the College, I determined to gratify my curiosity by seeing something of the Lions of Glasgow ; and, committing my footsteps to chance, I wandered for a considerable time about the city. I visited the Gallowgate and the Saltmarket, mused with a curious eye on the Doric beauties of the Brigade and the Goosedubs, and admired the romantic vista of the Candleriggs, terminating in the Ram's-horn Church, the graces of whose

architecture harmonize so perfectly with the classic euphony of its name. Thus interestingly occupied, the time sped unheeded, and the hour of four sounded from the College steeple, before I had effected those changes in my habiliments which the dirty condition of the streets had rendered necessary. Roused by this intimation, I completed my toilet as expeditiously as possible, and set forth on my engagement ; but ere I was able to reach the place of rendezvous, another half hour had elapsed. In the outer apartment of the place of business, so crowded in the morning, I now found only one clerk, who, "like a brotherless hermit, the last of his race," sat with blank and disconsolate aspect, probably ruminating on the more enviable occupation, in which his colleagues were then engaged, and counting the minutes till he should be set at liberty by their return. My uncle was by no means in the same bland and benevolent humour in which I had parted from him in the morning. He was pacing the apartment as I entered with long and irregular strides, and his arms immersed to the elbows in coat-pockets, about the size of a bushel measure. The expression of

his countenance spoke at once the state of his feelings. There was a compression of the lips, an unusual contraction of the brows and sparkle of the grey eyes beneath them, that portended a hurricane. He did not notice me on my entrance, and I had some time to collect myself for a patient endurance of the pitiless pelting of the storm that was evidently brewing in the horizon. He brushed close past me several times, without giving the smallest indication of his being aware of my presence; but at length, stopping full in my front, he thus sardonically addressed me.—“So, sir, ye’ve condescended to come at last. Ca’ ye this a quarter to four o’clock?” said he, pulling out a gold chronometer of uncommon dimensions. “Look at that, sir,” said he, holding it up, “it wants just seventeen minutes to five by the Tolbooth clock. I suppose ye dined wi’ the Professor afore ye set out, for ye couldna reckon on getting onything wi’ me at this time o’ day. But maybe they’re yer English fashionable hours, and ye thought it vulgar, perhaps, ay, vulgar, that’s what ye ca’t, to dine at——”

“I really beg your pardon, sir; I am very

sorry I have detained you ; but I was walking about the town, and was not aware of the lateness of the hour, till——”

“ Ye wasna aware o’ the lateness o’ the hour ? But ye ought to ha’e been aware o’t, sir. Is my stomach, that’s as boss as a drum, to pay the penalty o’ your negligence ? It’s weel we ha’e some o’ the same blood in our veins, or I wadna ha’e pardoned this. But dinna, in time to come, lippen ower muckle even to *that*, or ye’ll maybe find ye’re leaning against a slap. There’s them wi’ as muckle o’ my blood that I ha’ena forgi’en, no, and what’s mair, winna forgi’e, till I or they are laid in the kirk-yard.”

His voice fell towards the close of the sentence, and he pronounced it in a deep and hollow tone. In a moment he was silent. His former train of thought and emotion seemed to be suddenly changed ; and when he again spoke, it was in a softened and milder voice.

“ But there’s enough said, and maybe mair than was needfu’. After a’, ye was in a strange place, and exactness is maybe no to be expectit in a callant like you. Sae come awa’, for Gir-

zy will think I'm lost a'thegither," said he, putting on a broad-brimmed quaker-looking hat; "we've lost mair time already than there was occasion for."

We went forth accordingly, and, on reaching the street, I was desired by my uncle to "cleek oxters." Sanscrit was not more unintelligible to me than these words; but observing that he extended his arm to receive mine, I understood the signal, and obeyed the mandate. We walked at the rate of five miles an hour, and of course soon reached the house. As we turned the last corner, I observed the head of Girzy protruded from the window, evidently in anxious expectation of her master, and watching to receive the earliest notice of his approach. Girzy received us on the landing-place of the stair, and inquired, with apparently much solicitude, into the cause of the present most unwonted breach of regularity.

"I began amaist to think," said she, "that ye had just gane hame wi' Provost Shortridge or Collector M'Nair, as ye did yince about seven years ago, without sendin' me word. But that was no very likely neither. God grant he's

no dead, says I to mysel ; he surely canna ha'e faun down in the dead-thraws, like Bailie Wallace, or just gane aff in a pluff like puir Doctor M'Corkadale, or——"

Over how wide a field the conjectures of Girzy might have extended cannot now be ascertained ; for my uncle, to whom the last gratuitous suppositions seemed by no means agreeable, cut them short by stating, that he had been detained by business, and that I had accompanied him home, for the purpose of partaking of his repast, which he desired might be served up without delay. The expression of her countenance evidently showed that this was very unexpected intelligence to the worthy matron, who betrayed considerable symptoms of being what is termed in nautical phrase "taken aback." Thinking it more politic, however, to conceal her discomfiture, she turned towards me with a smiling aspect, and said, " We're very glad to see you, sir, though I'm fear't yer denner will no just be sae good as it might ha'e been, if Mr Spreull had tell't me ye war comin'."

" Haud yer peace, and let it be sair't immediately," interrupted her master, as we entered

the parlour; "I have been tormented wi' a yirnin' for these twa hours; and here, bring me a candle to gang down to the cellar."

While he was thus engaged, I had leisure to examine the apartment. It was of small dimensions; the furniture it contained was of antique construction, and had evidently seen better days, but the room bore altogether an air of snugness and comfort. On a chair before the fire hung a duffle wrapper, and a Kilmar-nock nightcap, chequered in various diagonal divisions of blue and scarlet; and a pair of morocco slippers, the primitive colour of which was now undistinguishable, rested against the fender. From these circumstances, it was tolerably apparent, that the comforts of the master were not neglected by his establishment. A table was laid for dinner, with a cloth by no means rigorously clean, and the few appurtenances displayed on it, were not remarkable for nicety or elegance. On opposite sides of the fireplace, stood a large black-hair sofa, and an old-fashioned, high-backed easy-chair, from which conveniences it might be inferred as probable, that the owner was occasionally in the

habit of indulging in an evening nap. One end of the room was occupied with a book-case, the shelves of which were tenanted to the utmost extent of their capacity. Among the works it contained, in the cursory glance I had time to throw over them, I recognised Swift's Works and De Foe's, the Tatler, Spectator, and Rambler, Smollett's Novels, a translation of Rabelais, the Institutes of Scottish Law, Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace, an odd volume of Hume's History, and a considerable body of Calvinistic divinity. Over the chimney-piece hung a portrait of Mr Pitt.

In making the preceding observations, my attention was occasionally diverted from its more immediate object, by hearing, through the open door, the following monologue in the kitchen.

“ Lord saf us ! what's to be done ? Here he's brought the young Englishman to denner, and there's naething, guid or bad, in the hoose, but some cauld beef, and the kail that wasna suppit at yesterday's denner. If he had but sent me yae hauf hour's notice, I could hae gotten a gigot of mutton, and had things a wee decent.

But there's nae use in talking about it.—Jenny, clap on yer mutch, and rin awa ower to Thomson, the flesher in the Stockwell, and bring hame a pund o' minched collups in yer brat, and bring twa tippenny tarts frae Baxter the baker's, and bid him charge them in the buik; and mind ye dinna staun' clashin' wi' a wheen o' thae idle ne'er-do-weel hizzies at the Westport well, but gang stracht there and back, and mak haste, or ye shall never pit yer ugly neb inside o' this door again, I can tell ye that."

My uncle soon returned from the cellar, charged with a bottle in each hand, which gave, in externals, a promise of antiquity, not afterwards belied by their contents. Having decanted a bottle of choice old Madeira, and deposited it on the "chimley lug, just to tak the air aff o't," he next proceeded to doff his external habiliments, and to invest himself in the wrapper, night-cap, and slippers, laid out for him by the providence of Girzy. A more grotesque figure cannot well be imagined, than that now presented by the old gentleman; and, notwithstanding the respect, approaching to awe, with which he had inspired me, I ventured to

indulge in a laugh, loud enough to attract his attention. Coleridge's description of the Ancient Mariner was not inapplicable to his figure, and to this day I never read the following passage of that beautiful and transcendently imaginative poem, without thinking of my uncle David—

“ I fear thee, ancient mariner,
I fear thy sklnny hand ;
And thou art *long, and lank, and brown,*
As is the ribb'd sea-sand.”

The comfort of his domestic integuments, and of his easy-chair, had apparently contributed to his good-humour, for he was not offended at the rather impertinent liberty I had assumed. “ So you're laughin' at your uncle in his night-gown and coul? I dare say they're no very bonny ; I'm sure they're auld enough ; but when ye come to be an auld bachelor like me, Cyril, (which God grant, for your ain sake, may never be,) ye'll care as little aboot the look o' things then as I do now. But I wonder what the deevil keeps Girzy wi' the dinner ; this is no like her for ordinar ; it's noo on the chap of sax.— Ay, come awa,” said he, addressing Girzy,

who that moment entered, carrying a tureen, “it’s nine hours since a morsel has passed my thrapple, and I’m sair forfachten for want o’ something.”

Girzy deposited the tureen on the table, and supplied us with plates from before the fire. One of these my uncle filled to the brim with broth, and handed across the table to me, informing me, at the same time, that he had only sent me “a very few.” He then helped himself in the same proportion, that is, to the full extent of the capacity of the dish, and seizing on a “farel” of oatmeal cake, which lay in a bread-basket by his side, he fell to work with the voracity of a famished wolf. Girzy was too well aware of the deficiencies of the repast, and too sensitively apprehensive of a stigma being thrown by these deficiencies on the character of the establishment, in which her own was so materially involved, not to make an effort to palliate and excuse them.

“Really,” said she, addressing herself to her master, who was too much absorbed in eating to pay any attention to her, “really it’s no blate o’ Mrs Ross, the henwife, that lives oot at

Partick; wad ye believe it, she has neither sent me the turkey nor the pair o' howtoudies I ordered frae her last week, though she tell't me I might lippen to gettin' them, on the word o' an honest woman. As for Thamson the flesher, the man's gane clean demented a'thegither. Didna he gang and send the loin o' veal and the kidneys I ordered there mysel yesterday's blessed day, to Spreull the grocer's, in Gibson's Wynd? Sae the tae thing wi' the tither has left the hoose sae bare o' provisions, as it's a shame and a disgrace for a gentleman's hoose to be. Ye maun just thole the day wi' some cauld beef and some minched collups, which was what I had gotten for yersel, afore I kent o' Maister Thornton."

My uncle chanced to finish his plate of broth, as the matron pronounced the last sentence of her apologetical oration, and becoming then, for the first time, aware that her clapper was in motion, lost no time in stopping it, by desiring her gruffly, "To haud her gaffin, and rax the Madeira;" with both of which mandates, Girzy, having accomplished her business of explanation, willingly complied. Her injunctions

to Jenny against dilatoriness on her errand, appeared to have produced good effect on that damsel; for the minced collops and the tarts made their appearance in good season, and were done due honour to by both of us. My appetite, like my uncle's, was pretty sharp, and when the cloth was removed, after cheese, I felt every internal evidence of having made a good dinner. It was much to the satisfaction of Girzy that I did so on the present occasion; and her attention to my wants was really quite overpowering.

“That's no a gude slice o' the beef ye're sending Maister Thornton,” she would say to my uncle; “send him a bit nearer the bane.” Or addressing me, “Tak a few mae o' the collups, they'll no hurt ye.—Lord saf us, ye're no done!—Just tak ae spoonfu' mair; at your age, yer teeth's langer than yer baird. Weel, if ye'll no try the collups again, ye maun tak a tart,” continued she, on hospitable thoughts intent, shovelling, at the same time, a whole one upon my plate, nolens volens, and again placing it before me. Luckily, in the present case, it happened to be *volens*; and the tart was duly dis-

patched, with as much facility of deglutition, and appearance of relish, as Girzy herself could desire.

The table being cleared, and wine glasses placed before us, Girzy put the interrogation,—“What bowl are ye for?” and being answered “Number seven,” soon after made her appearance with a China bowl capable of containing about a gallon, which, with lemons, sugar, and a bottle of rum, was placed before her master.

“Ye’ll maybe no like punch,” said my uncle to me, “and if sae, ye’ll just drink on at the Madeira; or there’s a bottle o’ claret out ower there,” pointing to a corner of the room, “gin ye like it better. Make yourself quite free, and ca’ for whatever ye like; if it’s no to be had *in* the house, it’s to be had *out* o’ the house, and that’s the same thing.”

I assured him in reply, that I would take advantage, if required, of the liberty he thus gave me; but as I had never tasted punch, it was necessary that I should do so, to enable me to act as a conscientious judge in the case.

The office of mingling the discordant elements of punch, into one sweet and harmonious

whole, is perhaps the only one which calls into full play, the sympathies and energies of a Glasgow gentleman. You read, in the solemnity of his countenance, his sense of the deep responsibility which attaches to the duty he discharges. He feels there is an awful trust confided to him. The fortune of the table is in his hands. One slight miscalculation of quantity, —one exuberant pressure of the fingers,—and the enjoyment of a whole party is destroyed. With what an air of deliberate sagacity does he perform the functions of his calling! How knowingly he squeezes the lemons, and distinguishes between Jamaica rum, and Leeward Island, by the smell! No pointer ever nosed his game with more unerring accuracy. Then the snort and the snifter, and the smacking of the lips, with which the beverage, when completed, is tasted by the whole party! Such a scene is worthy of the pencil of George Cruikshank, and he alone could do justice to its unrivalled ridicule.

Even in my uncle there was something of all this apparent. An anxious nicety in the compounding of the liquor, as if he considered it

necessary to his character as a punch-maker, that it should meet my approbation. If so, the old gentleman was gratified, for I had no sooner tasted its contents, than I expressed my full and unhesitating resolution of what is called in Glasgow, "sticking to the bowl." Under its exhilarating influence, a freer and less constrained intercourse was soon established between us. I felt perfectly at ease, amused my saturnine companion with school-boy anecdotes, and we became, in short,

"A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two."

Young as I was, I soon discovered my uncle to be a person of much natural shrewdness, and considerable acquired knowledge, with a memory well stored with local anecdotes, which were rendered more piquant and amusing, by a certain broad and caustic humour, with which they were invested by the narrator.

Our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Girzy, who approached the table with a wine glass in her hand, and thus addressed her master.

“ I’m just come to ask for a preein o’ the bowl, to drink the health o’ Maister Ceeral there. Ye ken it’s no for the punch, for I keep the keys o’ the gardevin, and I can tak what I like, and you neither ken nor care ; but it’s noo twa-and-twenty years come Candlemas, that I’ve keepit your hoose, and I never saw kith or kin o’ yours within the door till this blessed day. Sae here’s till ye, Maister Ceeral,” said she, raising to her lips the glass which her master had filled a bumper ; “ here’s till ye, and ye’re hairtily welcome to yer uncle’s hoose ; I ken ye are sae, though he’s maybe no had the grace to tell ye as muckle. And here’s till you, too, sir, I houp ye’ll be kind to yer nevoy, noo ye’ve gotten him doon here, and no be snappin’ him up sae short as ye do folks for ordinar, for he doesna ken yer ways yet ; and,” added she, lowering her voice to a confidential whisper, “ he’s as nice and canty a callant as ever I clap-pit een on, and no pridefu’ about his meat.”

“ Are ye gaun to stand there a’ night, yelpin’ in our lugs ?” exclaimed my uncle, with impatience, on finding Girzy’s harangue was extending beyond its due limits ; “ gang and get the

tea maskit, and send it ben when I ring for't." Exit Girzie. "It's a sad thocht, Cyril, that, single or married, there's nae escapin' frae the deavin' o' a woman's tongue. I've a' my life been shy o' yokin' to with ony o' them, and resolved first and last, baith to live a bachelor and die one; but you see, after a', I've made little profit o't. That Girzy's a bell whose clapper never lies; and the warst is, she kens I canna want her, though the disturbance she gies me's beyond description. But there's still a thocht mair in the bowl," added he, "and there's yae toast we maun drink in a bumper; so take aff your dribblet, and put in your glass."

I did so.

"Here's the health o' your father, and your leddy mither; your brith—na, yer sisters."

"And may God Almighty bless them," exclaimed I, a little elevated by what I had drank.

"Amen!" ejaculated my uncle, as he raised his glass.

"In giving the toast," continued he, "the name o' puir Charles just cam', without thinking, to my lips, though I ken he's dead; weel I wat, his death maun hae been a waesome loss

to your parents. I mind him weel when I was at Thornhill ; he was the gleggest and the funniest wee chiel' that ever gladdened my een ; and yet, for a' that, he would often put his wee hand in mine, and walk out wi' me quite quietly and doucely, just as if the bairn likit the company o' an auld man like me. And he would tell me about his powney, and his dows, and fleech wi' me to gang and look at them, and happy was the wee man when I gaed wi' him. I wat he wasna like you, little sinner as ye was, that would never bide wi' me twa minutes on end, but come todlin ahint me, and pook me by the coat-tails, and then rin awa' laughin', as fast as your twa fat legs wad carry ye. An' yet ye was a blithe and winsome bairn, too, though I'll no say but I likit him the best. An', wae's me, he's gane ! Is't no strange, that Death shuld tak' a young and gleesome creature like that, and leave an auld man like me ? But the ways o' Providence are no to be accounted for. Oh, but it gars me grue to think on him !"

The old gentleman was not much accustomed to the melting mood ; and there was a striking, perhaps to an indifferent spectator, a ludicrous

contrast, between the warmth and tenderness of feeling displayed in the matter spoken, and the gruff and saturnine expression with which it was delivered. An occasional huskiness and tremor was discernible in his voice; and he found it necessary several times to clear his throat, with a cough so loud and sonorous, as to prove that his difficulty of utterance did not originate in the feebleness of his lungs.

“But there’s yae part,” continued he, after a short pause, “there’s yae part o’ the letter ye brought me, that I dinna very weel understand; and I wad like to hae’t redd up to me, for I’ve an unco interest about a’ that concerns your family.”

So saying, he produced from his pocket a letter, folded in the shape in which letters of business are usually preserved, and bearing the following indorsation:—

Thornton, Mrs Elizabeth.

Thornhill, 22d September 18—.

Concerning son Cyril, and sundries;

Received 27th September 18—:

Answered—————

And having adjusted his "specs," read aloud from it, the following extract :

" You have, of course, received intimation of the terrible infliction with which it has pleased God to visit this family. The dreadful accident by which we had to deplore the loss of one son, long left us little ground on which we could found a hope for the preservation of the other. I thank, God, however, he is at length restored to us——."

" Now," my uncle continued, " though I kent, wae's me, that puir Charles was dead, afore I got your leddy mither's letter, yet I never heard tell o' the awfu' accident she speaks about, nor how your life cam amaist to be despaired o', and it would be a great satisfaction to me to hear a' the sad story ; for Charles had wun himsell into my heart, in a way I never tell't naebody when he was leevin', for fear o' settin' folk a bletherin'. But, noo he's dead, it's nae matter. It often seemed strange to mysell, that his figure haunted me like a ghaist. It's true, I seldom thocht on him by day, yet he was aye present in my dreams at night, wi' his blue e'en, and his gowden hair, lookin' up sae douce and sweet-

ly in my face; for his looks differed a handle frae yours, and he had neither your black curly pow, nor your dark e'en. It wad be a sad pleasure to me, to hear how the bonny innocent cam by his death."

My uncle had been too much engrossed with his own feelings, to think at all of mine. I sat writhing in my chair, as he spoke. Every word had been torture. I felt the blood rush in volumes to my head, and my temples throb almost to bursting, and then, by a sudden revulsion, it was again thrown back upon my heart, and lay a load upon my lifesprings. But this subsided. What I had drank, though far too little to disturb the serenity of an older and sounder head, was yet enough to act as a strong stimulus to a brain which, like mine, had scarcely recovered from the effect of recent inflammation. I was spurred on to comply with my uncle's wishes, by a strange and unnatural excitement, and I narrated, with a shuddering and shrinking heart, the circumstances of the fatal story. I stood while I spoke. At first, the wild energy of my manner seemed to strike him with surprise, but as my narrative approached the

horrid catastrophe, he, too, became overpowered by emotion, and starting from his chair, came and clasped me in his arms,—“ Say nae mair, Cyril,—for the love o’ God, sae nae mair. —I ken, I see, I understand a’ noo.” And he kissed my forehead, and as I looked on him, I saw the tears roll down the furrowed channels of his cheeks.

Scott and Wordsworth, both undoubtedly high authorities in everything connected with the human heart, agree that there is something more than ordinarily moving in “ the tears of bearded men.” It was perhaps fortunate, in the dangerous state of excitement in which I then was, that those of my uncle served in some degree to divert the current of my emotion.

“ Ay,” said he, observing my gaze fixed on him, “ ye may see I’m greetin’. I’ll no deny’t ; but it’s no for him, it’s for you.”

And he once more pressed me in his arms.

“ Poor Cyril ! it wants nae words to tell me how your life cam to be amaist despaired o’ ; yet blessed be Providence ye’ve been sparet, and come safely through your awfu’ trials. Ye may believe me,” said he, wiping his eyes,

“ these are the first draps that through a lang life have wat my e’en. I have never kent the blessing of a tear sin my mither’s death, and then I was just saxteen year auld ; and I little thocht that onything could have gart me greet in my auld age.

“ But here’s that born deevil, Girzy,” said he, suddenly passing his handkerchief across his eyes, and perking his face instantly into its usual austere expression, “ I wadna that she fund me yammerin’ this gait, for a thousand pounds.—What, in Satan’s name, brings ye here, when there’s naebody wants ye ?” said my uncle, with more than usual asperity ; “ I tell’t ye I would ring for tea when we wantit it,—wasna that aneuch ? But ye maun aye be interruptin’ a’ rational conversation, with the sound of yer gab, and the sight o’ yer ill-faured neb.”

“ Ye ken ye tell’t me to mask the tea,” responded Girzy, with meekness, “ and it’s been maskit this hauf hoor, and it’s now amaist cauld ; sae I cam to see gin ye hadna forgotten’t a’the-gither.”

“ Weel, tak awa’ the bowl, and bring’t in ; onything’s better than your clack.”

Girzy accordingly set to work in removing the punch-bowl and its appliances, and replacing them with the tea-tray. She soon showed, however, that her attention was not wholly engrossed by the operation in which she was engaged; for, after looking for a moment at her master, she exclaimed,—

“ Lord preserve us, Mr Spreull, what’s the matter wi’ yer e’en?—they’re as red as a boiled labster. Ye surely canna hae gotten the opthammy in them, that the Hielanders brought hame frae Egypt wi’ them? Ye just look, for a’ the world, as if ye had been greetin’.”

“ It’s a strange thing,” rejoined her master, rather astounded at this shot in the bull’s-eye, —“ it’s really an astonishing thing, that a man canna get a grain o’ ause in his e’e, without its being made matter o’ remark by an idle limmer like yersell. Me greet indeed! Fesh the tea ben, and let me hear nae mair o’ sic nonsense.”

The tea soon made its entrée, garnished with a plate of “ cookies,” and a saucerfull of Girzy’s own jam; and these being all duly partaken of, I prepared to take my leave.

“ Ye maun just wait awee,” said my uncle,

“ I canna let you gang hame, in a strange town, by yoursell.—Girzy, send Jenny to tell Sanders MacAuslan to come here frae the office directly, for he maun see Cyril safe hame to the College.”

In vain did I protest, that I knew the way perfectly, and would infinitely prefer walking alone, to being placed under Sanders MacAuslan’s protection. Entreaties and protestations were of no avail ; and I was obliged to submit. At length Sanders arrived ; but I found my annoyances did not end here.

“ Ye’ll just wrap this aboot yer craig,” said Girzy, approaching me with a huge old greasy-looking comforter in her hand, and applying it officiously to my throat, and blocking up my mouth with a triple entrenchment of woollen.

“ And here’s my big-coat,” said Mr Spreull, seizing me at the same moment by the arms, and pushing them successively into the sleeves of an upper Benjamin, under the weight of which I could scarcely move.

“ The streets are wat the night,” said Girzy, coming again to the attack, “ and ye’ll no gang hame without my pattens.” This was too much ;

and finding my only hope of escape consisted in flight, I watched my opportunity,—bolted through the door, with all the rapidity which the weight of my accoutrements would allow of,—and, in spite of the oppression of my comforter and upper Benjamin, reached the College in safety.

CHAPTER VII.

“ ————— Here science rears
Her proud emblazon'd front on high, and here
By these time-darken'd pillars, and beneath
These reverend colonnades, in distant times,
Did sages send those words of wisdom forth,
Which circled all the echoes of the land,
And yet are in our ears.”

The Principal, an Epic Poem.

A FEW weeks passed away, and the courts of the College, formerly deserted and silent, were instinct with life and bustle. The session had now commenced, and nearly two thousand students crowded its halls. These were principally the sons of merchants and tradesmen of the city, and natives of the north of Ireland, of the very lowest order of the people, who came generally in a state of miserable destitution, to qualify themselves in the speediest and cheapest manner for the functions of the ministry. The leavening of English in this promiscuous assemblage was comparatively small, and chiefly furnished by the dissenters, who were compelled to seek in the more liberal establishments of

Scotland, that access to knowledge and instruction, from which they were legally excluded by the great seminaries of their native land. There were also a few Englishmen of a higher class, who were placed like myself under the more immediate guidance and tuition of some particular professor, and in whose family they were received as inmates.

Educated as I had been in comparative privacy and seclusion, the scene in which I now mingled was naturally fraught with powerful interest. I entered with ardour the new field of honourable contention that was opened to my exertions, and received all the advantage which is invariably found to result, from the collision of youthful minds and the successful excitement of emulation. Learning now dropped the forbidding mask which she had hitherto worn in my eyes, and appeared adorned in graces which I had never imagined her to possess. In short, I entered, in jockey phrase, for all the University plates and sweepstakes for which I was qualified, and though generally not first in the race, I always saved my distance, and was more than repaid by the vigour of limb and

elasticity of muscle which I permanently acquired from my exertions, even when unsuccessful in the struggle.

I feel a melancholy pleasure in looking back on the eminent persons who then shed a lustre on the University, and to whose kindness and instruction I have been so deeply indebted. Many years have passed, and they all, with one exception, sleep in the grave. May I be pardoned if I venture to embody in these Memoirs my own youthful impression of men, whose names have at least outlived their generation, and whose memory is yet warmly cherished in the hearts of thousands? They are now beyond the reach of praise or censure, but I would speak of them only in a spirit of reverence and love.

Of Professor R—— I have already transiently spoken. He was certainly a person of elegant accomplishments, and, as a man of the world, stood unrivalled among his colleagues. It must be a rare circumstance, that an obscure northern university can number in its members, a person who like him was qualified to shine in a more conspicuous, if not a higher

sphere. Of the depth of his learning it is not for me to speak; but I believe it was his ambition rather to be distinguished as a poet and a polite writer than as a scholar—that he would have preferred the character of the Addison to that of the Porson of his age. Perhaps this bias of his inclinations proceeded from a knowledge of his own powers, and he chose that walk in which he was qualified to shine, in preference to one which he could have pursued with little prospect of distinguished success. If so, he did wisely. In the “Characters of Shakspeare’s Plays,” he has left behind him a work which may serve as a model of elegant and philosophical criticism, and which, notwithstanding all that has since been written on the subject, still maintains its place in our literature. In poetry he was less successful. What, in the present day, can be said of a *Rondeau on a Rose*, or an *Idyllium on a Lady knitting*? He wrote a play, too, which, if I remember rightly, was damned; if not, it should have been so. His mind was essentially unpoetical. He could not disembody his spirit, and quicken with it the beings of a new crea-

tion. His soul was chained to its tenement, and bore about it too plainly the marks of scholarship and criticism. It was not the soul of a poet, but of Professor R——.

No person could have filled the Chair of Humanity with greater usefulness and success. His mind was thoroughly imbued with the beauties of Roman literature; and he was happy in the mode of communicating his instruction: though it must be confessed, that a gentleman distinguished, as he was, for the elegance and refinement of his manners, was not the person best calculated to maintain a constant subordination in the crowd of turbulent and vulgar boys by whom he was surrounded. Mr R——, I think, was somewhat of a misogynist; at all events, he was not partial to female society, and seldom mingled in it. He was a bachelor; and there were rumours afloat among the students, of an attachment to a Russian princess, when he resided at Petersburg with Lord ——, which was believed to have occasioned the celibacy of his future life.

In large and mixed society, he was perhaps a little formal and precise. It may be, that he disliked

the general tone of society in Glasgow, and it probably was so. But of a small and select circle, he was the life and the ornament. I look back with pleasure and gratitude to those hours of familiar intercourse which I enjoyed as an inmate of his family, when, vailing the high claims of his age and character, he appeared only as the companion and the friend.

The Greek Chair was filled by Professor Y——. He it was who made the strongest and most vivid impression on my youthful mind, and it is his image which is still imprinted there, the most deeply and ineffaceably. That he was a profound and elegant scholar, I believe has never been denied. No master ever ruled with more despotic sway the minds of his pupils. None ever possessed the art of communicating his knowledge so beautifully and gracefully,—of transfusing the glowing enthusiasm of his own mind into that of his audience. Over every subject to which his great powers were devoted, did he cast a mantle of grace. From him a dissertation on the Digamma, or a Greek particle, became instinct with interest. His mind was the real philosopher's stone : it transmuted all

baser metals into gold. I cannot analyse his character, and examine its separate elements. He appears to me only one grand and majestic whole, and as such only can I consider him. The admiration which he inspired in my youth, still remains undiminished; it enters vitally into my idiosyncrasy; it is part and parcel of me, and must remain with me till I die. Nothing could be more captivating than the eloquence with which he treated of the liberty, the literature, and the glory of ancient Greece, while tears of enthusiasm rolled down his cheeks. He was naturally a great and effective orator; and had his powers been called into action in a different field, he might have added something to our scanty and imperfect records of national eloquence. It has always seemed to me, that his mind bore some resemblance to that of Burke. It possessed, I think, though perhaps in a smaller degree, the same vivid and creative power, and delighted in the same prodigal diffusion of intellectual riches. Like Burke, too, he felt all the influence of the spells he cast on others, and his own heart trembled at the images of dread or beauty which he

conjured up from the depth of his imagination. Professor Y—— was scarcely known as an author. I believe he published nothing but a Continuation of Johnson's Criticism on Gray, a *jeu d'esprit* rather too voluminous to be very happy, and a translation of the Odes of Tyr-tæus.

This is probably not exactly the portrait I should have drawn of this eminent person had I known him in maturer years, and been capable of exercising a cooler and more discriminating judgment on his character ; but such is the impression he left on me, and that impression is indelible.

Under Professor J—— I was initiated in the more simple and elementary principles of metaphysics, and the year in which I became his pupil, I have ever looked back upon as the greatest intellectual era of my life. Until Mr J—— assumed the Chair of Logic, I believe the studies of the class had been exclusively devoted to the acquisition of the Aristotelian philosophy, a branch of knowledge not in itself very generally useful, and in the mode of teaching it not

fraught with any peculiar advantage to the student. Of all men, Professor J—— is perhaps most entitled to be called a *radical reformer*. He saw at a glance the deficiency of the system which till then had existed. He knew that the means were everything, and the end comparatively nothing; that it was little to acquire a knowledge of the philosophy of Aristotle, but all in all to bring into full action and development, the dormant faculties of youthful minds. He did not hesitate, therefore, at once to overthrow the whole system followed by his predecessors, and to introduce a course of study in its place, marked throughout by practical good sense, and an extensive and thorough knowledge of the human mind. No success was ever more brilliant and decided, and I believe I may safely say, that the Logic Class is now admitted by all who have, like myself, experienced its benefit, to be paramount in importance to every other in the circle of academical study.

Professor J——, I believe, has outlived his contemporaries, and still survives. Like the last oak of the forest, he stands the sole relic of a generation which has passed away. He too

is soon destined to fall, but surely not unhonoured.

It was no common advantage to enjoy the instruction of persons so distinguished as those I have already mentioned. But my hours were not wholly devoted to study.

A young Englishman, however moderately graced with the advantages of birth or fortune, is always an object of attraction to the female circles of Glasgow. But when, as in my case, he united the character of being heir-apparent to a fine English estate, to that of being heir-presumptive to a rich old uncle, it was not likely that he should be suffered to languish in obscurity. It was therefore not long that I was destined to “waste my fragrance on the desert air;” I soon rose into request among civic dignitaries and mercantile magnates. All mothers with marriageable daughters courted my society. It is true, in Glasgow, morning visits are neither fashionable nor convenient, and these Professor R—— informed me I must not look to have. But the gentlemen generally sent their cards by their office porters, along with the invitations of their wives, and I was not at that time disposed

to attach much importance to points of punctilio. One visit, however, does occur to my memory.

I was busily engaged one morning in writing in my own apartment, when the door was opened, and my servant announced "Mr Archibald Shortridge, jun." I looked up from my paper, and beheld a young gentleman enter, with his hat in one hand, and the other thrust into his breeches-pocket. He was dressed in leather breeches, and jockey boots, a checked cotton neckcloth, and a short green jacket. *A priori*, he displayed a prodigious number of gaudy under-waistcoats, and a ponderous bunch of seals depended from what looked like part of a jack-chain, converted into gold by some chance touch of the philosopher's stone. *A posteriori*, he was adorned by the protrusion from his pocket of a Belcher handkerchief, which dangled in graceful negligence to his knee, thus affording relief to what he probably considered the comparative tameness of his personal scenery in that quarter. He entered with an air of swagger, and making me an awkward bow, he jerked himself into a chair with what was evidently intended to pass for elegant *nonchalance*. It was

apparent, however, that the booby laboured under considerable embarrassment in having to address a stranger; and it was not until he had crossed and uncrossed his legs several times, adjusted his neckcloth, and run his fingers through his hair, that he gave any articulate signals of his presence. At length, however, he did so. After a few preliminary observations on the weather, he informed me, that the object of his visit was to present an invitation to dinner, for the Friday following, and stated, that his father would have had the pleasure of calling on me, had his time not been entirely engrossed by his numerous official duties. To these civilities I made an answer as polite as the occasion required, and, in a few minutes, it was evident enough that the evanescent bashfulness of my visitor had entirely disappeared. He sat picking his teeth, lolled in a negligent attitude in his chair, and occasionally diversified the charms of his conversation by spitting on the floor. He first talked of College and the Professors, bespattering them all with his vulgar abuse; and then changing his topic to my uncle,—

“Have you seen Mr Spreull lately?” he pro-

ceeded; "you found him a queer chap, I take it—a crabbit auld chiel?"

"Perhaps you are not aware, Mr Shortridge, that the person you speak of is my uncle."

"Oh, I'm perfectly aware o't; and I wish I had just such another. But he's a rough diamond, as we used to say in Manchester, when I was there in Lees, Cheatham, and Company's counting-house, and he's better kent here by the name of Auld Girnegogibby than by his own. What lots of cash he has, to be sure! Do you knöw, Peter MacCormick tells me, he has never less than thirty thousand pounds lying in Robin Carrick's Bank. By Jupiter, I wish I had his name at the tail of a ten-shilling stamp."

I was now thoroughly disgusted with my visitor, and I think it probable my countenance gave some intelligence of the character of my feelings; if so, it was, or appeared to be, unnoticed.

"The Provost and he are hand in glove, but he never visits at our house now; and what's devilish odd, the very sight of me puts him in a passion. To be sure I quizz him a little now and then; but he's slow at a joke, and I dare

say never found that out. I offered to dine with him about three months ago, on a day my father was engaged to him, but all the answer I got was, that when he wanted my company he would ask it. He's got a capital cellar of wine too, I'm told, and has some fine Grenada rum that's been about seventy years in bottle."

I had become so tired of this style of conversation, that in order to communicate my feelings in what I thought the least offensive way, I took up the pen that lay before me on the table, and gave evident signs of a desire to resume my occupation.

"Oh, I see you're busy, so I'll not interrupt you," at length said my companion, taking the hint and rising to depart; "but don't forget next Friday at five, and I'll take care to warn some capital fallows to meet you, just to give you a spunk of the way we carry on the war in Glasgow." And so saying, with an air of perfect self-complacency, Mr Archibald Shortridge, junior, took his departure.

This dapper and facetious personage was no other, as the reader has of course discovered, than the son and heir-apparent of the Lord Pro-

vost of Glasgow, or, as it is more commonly designated in the west of Scotland, "the second city of the Empire." The invitation was of course accepted; but the dinner of so distinguished a civic dignitary deserves a new Chapter, and it shall have one.

CHAPTER VIII.

Dinner is on table.

My father desires your worship's company.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Give me a good dinner, and an appetite to eat it, and I will be happier than the mightiest potentate which this world can produce, surrounded by his satellites, and rioting in the indulgence of immeasurable power. Satisfied in this respect, I should pass my time in unalloyed happiness, and pity those whom fate had excluded from a similar enjoyment, as the victims of chance, and the slaves of misery.

DR JOHNSON:

ON the day, and precisely at the hour indicated, I was at the door of the Lord Provost. His house was situated in a small square, of a sombre and dreary aspect, the centre of which, instead of being as usual laid out in walks and shrubbery, was, with true mercantile sagacity, appropriated to the more profitable purpose, of grazing a few smoky and dirty-looking sheep. It was certainly not pleasant to approach the house of feasting amid the plaintive bleatings of these miserable starvelings ; but there was no time to be sentimental, and, like the Lady Baussiere, I pass-

ed on. On being admitted into the hall, I was received by two servants in the Royal livery, a circumstance of magnificence for which I was certainly not prepared. The truth was, however, as I have since discovered, that a male domestic formed no part of the ordinary establishment of the Lord Provost, and these were a couple of the City Guard, or, as they were more generally called, "Town's Officers," admitted *pro loco et tempore*, to assume the functions of livery servants. I was in the act of divesting myself of my hat and greatcoat, when I heard the following question put in a bawling voice from the landing place of the stair above.

"Hector, what ca' ye him?"

"I ettle he's a young Englishman frae the College," answered Hector.

"I carena' whare he's frae," returned the other, "but I want his name. Didna I tell baith you and Duncan, to cry oot a' the names to me, that they may be properly annooned?"

Hector lost no time in rectifying his mistake, and I speedily heard my name reverberated in a voice like thunder, through every corner of the mansion. The person from whose lungs

this immense volume of sound proceeded, was a large stout man with a head like a bull's, and a huge carbuncled nose. His dress bespoke him to belong to the same corps with his brethren below, and he was in fact no other than the person who officiated as town-crier, commonly known by the familiar *soubriquet* of Bell Geordy. His duty of announcing the guests being somewhat analogous to his usual avocation, he appeared to discharge it *con amore*, and proclaimed every successive arrival in the same monotonous and stentorian tones, in which he was accustomed to give public intimation of the arrival of a cargo of fresh herrings at the Broomielaw. Bell Geordy, too, was a wit, and did not scruple occasionally to subjoin in an under tone, some jocular remark on the character or person of the guests as he announced them.

The drawing-room into which I was ushered, was evidently an apartment not usually inhabited by the family, but kept for occasions of display. The furniture it contained was scanty, but gaudy ; the chairs were arranged in formal order against the walls ; and there were flower-stands in the windows, displaying some half-do-

zen scraggy myrtles, and geraniums, with leaves approaching to the colour of mahogany. The room was cold ; for the fire, which had evidently been only recently lighted, sent up volumes of smoke, but no flame ; and when I looked on it, I remembered to have passed a dirty maid-servant on the stair, with the kitchen bellows in her hand. On my entrance, I found I was the first of the party ; and before the attention of the reader is distracted by the arrival of fresh guests, it may be as well to seize the present opportunity of introducing him to the Lord Provost and his family.

His lordship was a little squab man, with a highly-powdered head and a pigtail, and an air somewhat strutting and consequential. His visage was a little disfigured by the protrusion of an enormous buck-tooth, which, whenever his countenance was wreathed into a smile, overshadowed a considerable portion of his underlip. One of his legs, too, was somewhat shorter than the other, which, when he walked, occasioned rather a ludicrous jerking of the body, and did by no means contribute to that air of graceful dignity which he was evidently desi-

rous of infusing into all his motions. He was dressed in a complete suit of black velvet, and bore conspicuously on his breast the insignia of his civic supremacy. His lady was a stiff and raw-boned-looking matron, hard in feature, and somewhat marked by the small-pox. She wore a yellow silk-gown, adorned in front with a Scotch pebble brooch, about the size of a cheese-plate, and on her head a green turban, from which depended on one side a plume of black ostrich feathers. The two daughters, Miss Jacky and Miss Lexy, displayed their young and budding charms by the side of the parent-flower. Neither had the smallest pretensions to good looks; but of their character, nothing immediately betrayed itself to the spectator, beyond a certain air of self-complacency, with which they occasionally regarded their pink dresses. There, too, was Mr Archibald Shortridge, junior, with his carrotty head, and his great red ears, his mouth perked up as if about to whistle, and his mutton-fists in his breeches-pockets, straddling before the fire, with the tails of his coat below his arms, to prevent all possible obstruction to the radiation of the heat. I

was welcomed by his lordship with an air of dignified hospitality, saluted with a nod by his son, introduced to, and benignantly received, by the Lady Provost and the young ladies.

The sound of the door-bell now became more frequent, and Bell Geordy's powers were called into full and active employment. I shall venture, even at the risk of being considered a romancer, (a character which more than any other I despise,) to give a specimen or two of the facetious manner in which this functionary discharged the duties of his office. As thus:—Door-bell rings—drawing-room door opens—Bell Geordy, in a loud, slow, and sonorous voice, “Doctor Struthers.” In a low and suppressed key, “Hech, but he’s a puir stick in the poopit.” Again:—Preparation as before. Bell Geordy—“Miss Mysie Yule.” In a lower tone, “She’s right aneuch to come here, for I’m thinkin’ there’s no muckle gaun’ at hame.” Forté —“Major Aundrew MacGuffin.” Piano—“Wi’ the happety-leg.—Maister Saumul Wal-kinshaw.—I’s e warrant he’ll carry awa’ a wamefu’.”

In vain did the Lord Provost, whose ear these

unseemly comments occasionally reached, express his disapprobation of the indecorum, and authoritatively direct him to confine his speech to the mere annunciation of names. Bell Geordy's wit was not thus to be trammelled, especially when he observed it generally followed by a grin and titter through the assembly. Everybody, indeed, appeared to enjoy those jokes which were cut at their neighbours' expense, without reflecting that their own appearance had probably given rise to similar witticisms.

At length the company were all assembled, and dinner, after a dreary interval of expectation, announced. The ladies, in solemn dignity, led the way, singly and unescorted by the gentlemen. I observed some little scuffling among the dowagers about precedence, and occasionally a poke of the elbow given and returned with interest, and my ear sometimes caught a contemptuous snorting, like that of a frightened horse, which proceeded from some of those ladies, who, defrauded by their more active competitors of what they considered their proper place in the cortège, were compelled un-

willingly to figure in the rear. The indignation of Mrs M'Corkadale, indeed, (the widow, I presume, of the poor doctor whose fate has been commemorated by Girzy,) was too vehement to be confined to mere pantomimic expression; and as she passed, I overheard the following soliloquy:—"Set her up, indeed, to walk before me! Does she think folk hae forgotten that her grandfather was a tailor on the tae side, and a flunky on the tither—that her father was naething but a broken baxter—and that she hersel was brought up in the Aums-house?—My certy, but she's no blate!"

The sight of the dinner-table, however, and the savour of the steaming viands, had a soothing effect in calming for the nonce, all effervescences of temper, and restoring mental equanimity to the ruffled matrons. The dinner, if not elegant, was plentiful. Corned-beef and greens at the top; roast sirloin at the bottom; ham and boiled mutton, *vis à vis*, at the sides; and goose and turkey at the opposing corners. Dr Mac-Turk said grace, and the worthy divine's solicitations for a blessing were no sooner concluded, than the guests, with one accord, cried ha-

voc, and commenced the work of destruction. Hector, Duncan, and Bell Geordy, felt that now was the tug of war, and trotted about the table with unwieldy alacrity, perspiring at every pore. “Duncan, a clean plate.”—“Geordy, fetch me a platefu’ o’ white soup.”—“Hector, rin for some o’ the turkey. Get twa or three slices o’ the breest. Mak haste, or the best o’t will be gane,” were the sounds which on all sides met the ears of the assiduous triumvirate. At length the choler of Bell Geordy was roused by the number of simultaneous demands for his services; for, though acting as chief ministering angel on the occasion, patience was not numbered among his angelic attributes; and, standing stock-still, he exclaimed in a loud and angry voice, “What for do ye sit there, craik, craikin’ a’ at yae time? Ye ken weel aneuch I can sair but yin at yince,” wiping the dew from his forehead as he spoke. “Tak my word, ye’ll come nae speed by’t; and he that craiks the loudest shall be last sair’t.”

The voice of the enraged Provost, who ordered him instantly to hold his peace and resume

his services, silenced any further appeal on the part of Bell Geordy, who returned to his functions, but with a dogged air, and more leisurely than before.

Partial repletion had now blunted the edge of the hunger of the party, and voracity was reduced to appetite. Conversation commenced, and jocular remarks were heard and laughed at in the intervals of eating. I had the honour of sitting next Miss Jacky Shortridge, who, having spent a year at Mrs Blenkinsop's seminary for young ladies, at Doncaster, considered herself quite *au fait* in the manners of the best society in England. She expressed her regret, that those of her native city were deficient in that polish and elegance indispensable to a person of refined tastes and English education ; that so few families in Glasgow kept carriages ; that the theatre was so badly attended ; and expressed strong hopes that " Pa" would allow her to spend next winter with her aunt, married to a cornfactor in Leith, who, of course, could introduce her to the first society in Edinburgh. The language of the Glasgow people she considered quite shocking to any person who had spent a year at

Doncaster, and acquired the true attic pronunciation inculcated in Mrs Blenkinsop's academy. Miss Jacky too, was particularly kind and pressing in her attention to my wants.—“ Let me help you to some of thir collups.”—“ Thae patties I can recommend.”—“ Take a bit of yon turkey.”

My attention was soon diverted from my fair neighbour to a fat and jolly-looking person at the upper end of the table, who, from the comic twinkle of his eye, and a certain buffoonery of manner, I concluded to be a sort of privileged joker and a wit. His good things, of whatever character they might be, were proved by the expectation that sat on the countenances of those around him, and the guffaws by which they were followed, to be well adapted to the taste of his audience. Deglutition paused whenever this merry and obese personage gave symptoms of being pregnant with a joke ; and an elderly lady, who, relying on her age and constitutional gravity, ventured to neglect this precaution, paid the penalty of her rashness, in being nearly choked while in the act of eating, from the sudden and uncontrollable laughter into which

she was thrown, by an unexpected explosion of his wit.

On the right of the Provost, sat a person who seemed to divide the admiration of the company with the "stout gentleman" at the other end of the table. His walk indeed was different. He did not attempt those broad and trenchant witticisms, in which lay the principal strength of his rival, but confined himself to story-telling, a department in which he shone without a competitor. In the narratives themselves I found little interest and no point, and had they been told by a less skilful narrator, would probably, even in Glasgow, have been considered flat and insipid. The principal charm of the performance appeared to consist in the invincible gravity with which incidents, at once coarse and trivial, were detailed, and the unrelaxed solemnity of visage maintained by the speaker, while laughter, loud and vehement, shook the sides of his auditors. To me all this was new, and I listened with curiosity, though not yet neophyte enough to participate in the enjoyment which it evidently diffused among the rest of the company.

The dinner was not, as is usual with such entertainments, served up in a succession of courses, and was without any of those little agreemens which the middle classes in England consider necessary to their comfort. Sweets and solids simultaneously garnished and loaded the board, and, when removed, were succeeded by the wine and the dessert. The gentlemen now began to show evident signs of anxiety for the departure of the ladies, who on their part appeared by no means disposed to afford them the gratification they desired. In vain did the Lord Provost recur to the facetious expedient of drinking the health of the ladies in the character of "the outward bound," and indicate his wishes by significant winks to his better half. The ladies openly expressed their intention of awaiting the introduction of the punch-bowl, and partaking of its contents, and they were at length only driven from their strong-hold by some coarse and indelicate jokes of Mr Mucklewham (the fat personage already mentioned), which indicated only too plainly the prudence and propriety of an immediate retreat.

The ladies were no sooner gone than Bell

Geordy made his appearance, bearing a bowl of extraordinary dimensions, which he deposited on the table. Lemons, sugar, limes, rum from Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands, soon followed, and expectation sat on every brow. It was not a matter of easy arrangement by whom these ingredients were to be mingled. The Lord Provost called on Mr Walkinshaw, but Mr Walkinshaw could not think of officiating in presence of so superior an artist as Mr Mucklewham. Mr Mucklewham modestly yielded the pas to Major MacGuffin; Major MacGuffin begged to decline in favour of Mr Pollock; Mr Pollock in favour of Dr MacTurk, and Dr MacTurk once more pushed the bowl to Mr Mucklewham, who, after many bashful excuses, was at length prevailed on to "handle the china." I have already noticed the solemnity and entire absorption of mind with which this portion of the Bacchanalian rites is uniformly celebrated in Glasgow, but it was now for the first time that I became witness of the fact. When the beverage had been duly concocted, at least an half hour passed, during which the merits of the punch formed the sole topic of conversation in

the party. On this subject, even the most taciturn and obtuse members of the company waxed eloquent. Whether the liquor was too strong or too sweet, whether it would be improved by another "squeeze of a yellow," or an additional lump of sugar, became topics of animated and interesting debate, in which all but myself took part.

Every improvement which human ingenuity could devise with regard to the punch, having been at length suggested, the business of drinking commenced in good earnest, each replenishing of the glasses being prefaced by a loyal or patriotic toast by the Lord Provost. The King, the Queen, the Prince of Wales, "the Trade of Clyde," having been drunk in bumpers, the current of conversation was gradually diverted into other channels. They were channels, however, in which the bark of my understanding was little calculated to swim. The state of the markets, the demand for ginghams, brown sugar, cotton, logwood, and tobacco, were matters on which my interest was precisely equal to my knowledge. There were jokes, it is true, and, judging from their effect, good ones; but

they were so entirely local, and bore a reference so exclusive to people of whom I knew nothing, and manners of which I really desired to know nothing more, that I found some difficulty in contributing the expected quota of laughter, to the general chorus of my more hilarious companions. My situation, indeed, was tiresome enough, but I endured it for an hour or two, before I quitted the party, then waxing deep in their cups, and joined the ladies in the drawing-room. On my entrance there, it was pretty evident that I was considered an unwelcome intruder. The female guests were gone, and the Lady Provost had, in the assurance that none of the gentlemen would be tempted to forsake the charms of punch for those of coffee and female society, divested her head of its former splendid garniture, and substituted a cap of very homely pretensions in its room. Miss Jacky was seated in front of the fire with her feet on the fender, apparently half asleep, and Lexy was busily engaged in repairing a garment, which, on my entrance, was hastily thrust under a chair, and obscured as much as possible from observation. The appearance of

a gentleman in the drawing-room was indeed a novelty, and, under the circumstances, not a very pleasing one. After partaking, therefore, of a dish of cold tea, and exerting myself for some time to keep up a languid conversation, I wished the ladies good night, and departed.

As I retrod my way to the College, I reflected on the novel scene and characters I had just quitted, and when my head was on my pillow, the contrast rose strongly between that society in which I had recently mingled, and the calm and quiet elegance of my beloved home. In my dreams that night, I returned to Thornhill. My mother came forth to embrace me, with love beaming from her pale countenance, and even the welcome of my father was kind. There, too, was Jane with her dove-like eyes, and little Lucy, than whom

No dolphin ever was more gay,
Upon the tropic sea,

as, with beating heart and glowing cheeks, she ran to cast herself into my arms.

Such were the visions of the night; they were broken only by the sound of the College bell, which recalled me unwillingly to the more

material world in which I was destined to move. After dressing by the cold hazy twilight of a winter's morning, I hurried across the College courts, more than ankle deep in snow, to my class. I was too late. Prayers were over, and the lecture had begun. The Professor lowered his huge eye-brows on me as I entered, and in a moment all my pleasing dreams were forgotten.

CHAPTER IX.

Winc. And what's this Delaval ?

Wife.

My apprehension

Can give him no more true expression,
Than that he first appears a gentleman,
And well conditioned.

English Traveller.

AT breakfast, Professor R—— appeared curious to know what impression had been made on me by the society into which on the day previous I had for the first time been introduced. He laughed at the description I gave of it, but said it was perhaps scarcely fair to judge entirely of the society of Glasgow by the specimen I had already seen. “In this city,” he said, “there are two circles. Of the one, which includes the great majority of the mercantile and manufacturing aristocracy, I need say nothing, since you are already, from actual observation, tolerably qualified to judge for yourself. But

there is another, a smaller circle, to which you have not yet been introduced. It consists principally of those who have united a taste for literature with the pursuits of business, and have not merged all the higher powers of a rational being, in the manufacture of muslins or the importation of tobacco. The individuals of whom this circle is composed, are of course comparatively few, and, like their neighbours, are not untinged with some ludicrous peculiarities. These are fair game, and may be laughed at; yet you will find that in many essential points, they rise superior to the general body of society by which they are surrounded. It is in this circle alone that the Professors of the University ever mingle, and though not much in the habit of frequenting it myself, I will take care, if your curiosity is not yet satiated, to procure you an introduction."

I thanked the Professor for his offer, and accepted it; nor did I neglect, during my residence in Glasgow, frequently to take advantage of the introduction he was good enough to afford.

Nothing, I think, tends more to open the un-

derstanding, and enlarge the mind, of a young man just entering on life, than an opportunity of observing the manners, and tracing the prevailing current of thought, in classes of society different from his own. In this will be found the most efficacious antidote to that narrow bigotry, and those exclusive modes of thinking, which seldom fail eventually to impair the understanding, by circumscribing its exercise and expansion. Of minds originally endowed with equal strength, his will be found best prepared to take a useful share in the business of the world, of whom it can be said, that

"Mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes."

But I would speak only of myself, and I know of no more useful branch of education to which I have been indebted, than that which I studied at the supper parties and coteries of the Glasgow dowagers.

The only companion with whom at this period my intercourse at all approached to intimacy, was Charles Conyers, who, like myself, was an inmate in the family of one of the Pro-

fessors. He was a young Irishman, whom the death of his parents had freed, at an early age, from all moral control and guidance, and who had grown up from infancy to the verge of manhood, in the almost unlimited indulgence of every caprice. His guardians considered it their duty to protect his fortune, not to form his character, and suffered their ward to plunge into premature dissipation, if not without remonstrance, at least without any effectual restraint. It was, in truth, only owing to his own naturally generous disposition, that Charles Conyers had not become entirely a profligate. His very boyhood had been sullied by the precocious adoption of the vices of maturer age; and he had attained a proficiency in loose and dissolute acquirement, apparently inconsistent with his years. With all this, however, he had not, as might have been expected, grown up into a cold and heartless rake. Far from it. He possessed all the elements of a fine and noble character; and he displayed, when circumstances called it forth, a warmth and tenderness of feeling certainly incompatible with innate depravity of heart. To me he particularly attach

ed himself; and there was a charm in the openness and gaiety of his disposition, which I found it impossible to resist. He was the very soul of whim and frolic, and possessed in perfection that peculiar humour and vivacity indigenous to the Emerald Isle. It is probable, that under other circumstances, this intimacy might have been attended by bad consequences. In Glasgow it was not so. Both Conyers and myself were framed of very ductile materials, and if our intercourse occasionally involved me in scrapes, and led me into situations certainly of very doubtful propriety, my influence with him was at least sufficient to prevent his lapsing into any of those grosser excesses, which he knew I could not but regard with disgust.

It is perhaps an advantage to Glasgow, as a seminary of education, that it affords none of the appliances of elegant dissipation. Nowhere else does Vice meet the eye so perfectly denuded of those external decorations with which Refinement too often succeeds in hiding her deformity. She there appears not as a young and captivating female, rich in guilty and seductive blandishments, but as a haggard and disgusting

beldame. To be dissipated in Glasgow, one must cease to be a gentleman. He must at once throw off all the delicacy with which nature or education have invested him, and become familiar with the squalid haunts of low and loathsome debauchery. Youth cannot do this. At that age even the visions of sensual enjoyment are mingled and connected with high intellectual excitement. In the very strength and ardour of his passions, there is safety. He contemplates the glowing pictures of love and beauty, which teem in his imagination ; and he is guarded as with a sevenfold shield from the assaults of gross and vulgar pollution. In Glasgow, therefore, young and inexperienced as I was, my intimacy with Conyers had no tendency to produce an injurious effect on my character. To him, perhaps, it was of some benefit ; for my principles, if not strong, were unshaken ; and though I loved him, I was not blind to his errors.

Conyers was destined for the army, and spoke with enthusiasm of his prospects. In the passion for a military life, our hearts beat in unison. The sleeping embers within me were once

more fanned into a flame, which burned even more fiercely than before. I was again agitated by doubts and apprehensions lest the wish nearest to my heart might meet the opposition of my father. It is true, he had formerly given his consent that I should become a soldier ; but a sad change of circumstances had since taken place, and I was now an only son. It was probable, more than probable I thought, that my father's sentiments might have altered with regard to my future destination ; and most fervently did I deprecate this the only contingent misfortune, which appeared in my imagination to cast a shadow on my prospects.

The father of Conyers was an officer of rank, who had served with distinction in the American war ; and I listened with intense interest to the narratives of broil and battle with which he had been wont to amuse the childhood of his son. He told me tales of Washington, of Burgoyne, and of Cornwallis,—of ambuscades in the passes of the deep eternal forests, and of the destruction of gallant armies by enemies whom they could not see, and consequently could not resist. And then Wolfe and the siege of Que-

bee ! What would I not have given to have stood but for a brief space, sword-girt by his side, on the red heights of Abraham ! He spoke, too, of Minden and its field of glory, where the pride of France was humbled, and her banners trodden in the dust, till the battle rose before me, and I saw the dragoons charge on with harquebuss and gleaming sabres over the dying and the dead.

“ Down with the Fleurs de Lis, and wave the banner of St George ! Bravo the Green Horse ! The Enniskillings are plunging on through the morass on the right—God prosper them !—There go the gallant Evelyn’s brigade !—The enemy wavers !—Charge home, in the name of Old England !—Now the Guards take them on the left flank !—Hurrah ! the field is our own, and a sun of glory that shall never set, is gleaming on the arms of my country !”

It is with a smile on my lips, yet with something of melancholy in my heart, that I recall these sallies of strong though boyish enthusiasm. The glow of feeling which produced them soon faded, and is long since gone. It comes but once in the spring of life, and never lingers long.

In this manner was it that the communion of our hopes and wishes added mutually to their intensity. Towards one point did all the aspirations of my spirit converge. In one absorbing desire were garnered all my powers and energies ; and opposed to this, I felt that even filial duty and obedience would be but as dust in the balance. God might change my purpose —man could not shake it.

CHAPTER X.

Braken. Why looks your grace so heavily to-day ?

Clarence. Oh, I have spent a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, and ghastly dreams,
So full of dismal terror, was the time.

Richard III.

NEITHER my studies nor amusements, in whatever degree I was engrossed by them, had the effect of rendering me less attentive to my uncle. As our intercourse became more intimate and frequent, I was able to penetrate the rough husk of his character, and discover many estimable and even amiable qualities, for which the world had never given him credit. It was owing to the circumstances in which he had been placed, that the better feelings of his nature had remained dormant, while its lower and baser principles had been called into habitual exercise.

David Spreull had entered life penniless and friendless. He had been left to jostle his way

through a crowd of scheming and designing men, ever prompt to betray the unwary, and turn their neighbour's weakness to advantage. Trade, when combined with poverty, narrows the heart, while it sharpens the understanding. It had this effect upon my uncle. To compete with such rivals as I have described, it was perhaps necessary to adopt their weapons; but the deeper energies of his character had led him further. In all the arts of money-making, he had overtopped his instructors; and though rigid in his adherence to the established code of mercantile morality, had left no means of acquisition unemployed, in advancing the one great object of his life. Among those around him, he had the character of being sharp in trade; that is, one who considers all advantages fair in a bargain, and who is known to be as incapable of defrauding a creditor, as of forgiving a debtor. All his successes had been the produce of cold, dispassionate calculation, of deeper forecast than was possessed by those around him, and of a steady and undeviating adherence to the course prescribed by his own interest, wherever it might lead. Cut off, too, from his family and relations,

by distance on the one hand, and unkindness on the other, his heart had no object which might fill the void of its affections. Unconsciously, perhaps, he had long sought for something to love, but he had not found it; and the warm feelings thus repulsed from without, remained only in a state of deeper concentration within. Thus had his heart become soured; and all nobler and better principles of action, if not eradicated, were at least blunted by long inertion. He was not,—I am sure he was not, a miser; yet the habitual desire of acquisition still governed his character, and to amass wealth continued the sole object of his age, as it had been of his youth. His life had been passed in a crowded city, yet he had lived a solitary man, and he knew and felt himself to be so.

Such was the character, and such the circumstances, of my uncle, when I arrived in Glasgow. There was something about him to me so new and original, as at first to excite my curiosity and interest. These soon ripened into attachment; and the old man was gratified to find himself, for the first time in his life, the object of disinterested regard, in spite of that external

repulsiveness, of which he could scarcely be unconscious. There was something, perhaps, in the youthful artlessness of my deportment towards him, which bore with it convincing testimony that my attentions had their origin in no sinister motive. He felt this; and I soon became to him an object of regard and interest, which till then he had never known. There was a native though uncultivated power of intellect about him, which induced me often to court his society. I dined with him frequently; and though my visits to the counting-house were generally considered idle interruptions of business, and sometimes treated as such, even these troublesome attentions were, I believe, not unacceptable. Nor was it uncommon, that after business hours, he would consent to take in my company the unusual relaxation of a saunter in the Green, or a walk down the banks of Clyde, to the pretty and rural village of Govan.

Girzy, too, regarded me with complacency, and was most strict in her injunctions that I should always give her previous intimation of my intention to dine with my uncle. “When ye’re gaun to tak your denner wi’ us,” said she,

—"and the oftener ye do that, the mair welcome ye'll be,—just gie me three or four hours' notice, and gin there's onything better than anither in the toon o' Glasgow, my certy but ye shall hae't. But dinna come stravaigin' in aboot four o'clock, takin' folk a' by surprise as ye did afore, and allowin' nae time to mak things nice and comfortable, as I ken you English aye like to hae them." By giving her the desired promise, "I calmed her fears, and she was calm," though I believe I was never very rigid in my observance of it.

These dinner parties were occasionally much enlivened by the presence of Conyers, who was gifted with strong powers of humour, and a certain light-hearted jocularity, which frequently forced even the saturnine visage of my uncle to relax into a smile. He was not slow in establishing himself in the good graces of the old gentleman, who was always pleased whenever I could prevail on him to form an addition to our party. On one of these occasions an occurrence took place which merits prominent record in this portion of my narrative.

One evening, when Conyers and myself had

partaken of Girzy's good cheer, and my uncle was sedulously engaged in the task of the scientific mixture of a second bowl of punch, a letter was brought in and placed on the table, to await his leisure for perusal. He was apparently unwilling to disturb the social enjoyments of the festive board, by the introduction of business. "It maun be by the Greenock mail," said he, "which is later than usual to-night. I daresay it's just frae that sumph Bailie M'Phun, about the twa puncheons o' rum that leakit oot on board the Lord Melville, and cam hame little better than twa empty casks, and yet the Custom-house folk want to charge duty on them, the same as they had come hame fu'. I'm makin' the punch the now, and canna be fashed to put on my specs; sae, Cyril, as your een are baith younger and better than mine, ye may read it, and gie me an inkling o' the contents, which will do just as weel as if I read it mysel." I obeyed the old gentleman's directions, and taking the letter, read aloud as follows:—

“ *To* DAVID SPREULL, ESQ. MERCHANT,
Spreull's-land, Trongate, Glasgow.

“ *Auchterfechan Manse.*

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I AM commissioned by his inconsolable widow, to communicate the mournful intelligence of the death of your worthy brother, the Laird of Balmalloch, which took place last night, at seventeen minutes past eleven o'clock. For a week before his death, he had suffered sorely from a diaray, which wasted him down to a perfect skeleton, and left nothing for Death at last but a mere rickle o' bones. His spirit, poor man, passed away easily, for he lay in a dwam for many hours, from which he only awakened to find himself in Abraham's bosom. This is a gruesome loss to his wife and childer ; but I am glad to say they are supported by Providence under this sad dispensation, and submit to it with a resignation most edifying to behold. You being the nearest male relation, Mrs Spreull begs you will sign the funeral letters for next Tuesday, and make any arrangements

you think proper. I remain ever, your sincere and sympatheesing friend,

“ Dear Sir,

“ ARCHIBALD M'CRAIK.”

While I was engaged in reading this letter, my uncle was silent. When his ear first caught the intimation of the death of his brother, his frame was shaken by a sudden and convulsive tremor ; the lemon, which he was in the act of squeezing, dropped into the punch-bowl, and he threw himself back in his chair, where he remained immovable, with his face covered with his hands. We both saw that he was greatly agitated, and felt as if either sound or motion on our part, would have been an unwarrantable intrusion on his sorrow. The perfect stillness of the apartment was broken only by the breathing of my uncle, which was thicker and more laborious than usual. A few minutes passed in this manner. At length, raising himself in his chair, and stretching forth a hand to each of us, he said, “ Gang your ways hame, my bonny lads, the house o’ mourning is no the place for you. I wad be alane the night. Cyril, ye may

call to-morrow morning, gin ye like ; I'll be able to speak to you then, which I canna do 'now. Sae good night, and may God bless you baith." Having thus given us our valediction, he once more covered his face, and relapsed into his former attitude.

We departed quickly and silently as possible, but had scarcely reached the passage, when we were assailed by the watchful Girzy. " Lord saf us, Maister Ceeral, ye're no awa ? ye surely canna hae finished the bowl already ? and ye've no gotten yer tea yet—it's a' just ready to gang ben, sae just stap back, and I'll hae't maskit in a minute. I really think it's no that kind o' Mr Spreull to let you awa this frosty night, wi' sae little either o' meat or drink to keep out the cauld.—Maister Conyers, I houp it's no you that's takin' him awa at thae untimeous hoors ? Ye'll just bide whare ye are, and get yer tea, like good laddies, afore ye pit yae fit out ower the door the night. I ken weel, you young men may gang to waur places than ye're in the now, and I maun tak' a mitherly charge o' ye baith," said she, locking the outer door and securing

the key in her pocket; “Na, na, ye maun just bide a wee.”

This resolute determination of Girzy, who was probably rather annoyed that the “*cookies*” she had provided for tea should be left untasted on her hands, knowing, though no logician, that “*de non apparentibus, et de non existentibus, eadem est ratio*,” drew forth an explanation of the cause of our sudden departure. She no longer, on hearing this intelligence, opposed our egress, but gave vent to her surprise in sundry ejaculations connected with the melancholy event. “Hech, and the Laird’s dead at last!—Weel I wat, death micht hae taen a haur! o’ them that cou’d hae been warse spared!—I’se warrant Mr Spreull will be gaun’ to the funeral, and the snaw lyin’ on the ground.—Hech, sirs, we should be a’ mindfu’ o’ our latter end, baith auld and young!” and Girzy looked towards Conyers and myself, as if to intimate that the wisdom of this moral aphorism was intended for our especial benefit.

On the following morning I called on my uncle according to his desire. I was met at the door by Girzy, who informed me that he was

still in bed. She had, she said, “ been maist driven oot o’ her five senses, by the gruntin’ and grainin’ he had keepit up a’ night ; it was awsome to hear till him, puir man, pechin’ and sighin’ wi’ his sair trouble. An’ a’ this blessed day,” said she, “ neither bite nor sup has gane ower his thrapple ; but what’s mair extraordinar, he’s ordered me no to set fit within his chamber door ; sae when I want to ken aboot him, I’m just obliged to keek through the key-hole—but at ony rate, I’ll tell him ye’re here.”

So saying, in violation of the express injunction of her master, she ventured to enter his chamber, and inform him of my arrival, trusting, perhaps, for the pardon of her disobedience, to the agreeable intelligence of which she supposed herself the bearer. I was soon directed to enter, and found my uncle, as Girzy’s information had led me to anticipate, in bed. He stretched forth his hand to me as I approached, and having ordered Girzy “ to steek the door on the outside,” he desired me to “ ease myself,” at the same time pointing to a high-backed elbow-chair that stood near to the bed. His head was enveloped in a Kilmarnock night-cap,

the hue of which had once perhaps been a bright scarlet, but which had then certainly degenerated into a dark and dingy crimson. His face was more than usually gaunt and cadaverous, and from the heaviness of his eyes, and the absence of that *virida vis*, by which his countenance was generally marked, it was not difficult to perceive, that he had passed a night of mental suffering and agitation.

“Ye’re a kind laddy, Cyril,” said he, “ye’re a kind and good laddy, to come and sit at the bedside o’ a crabbit and cankered auld man.”

I, of course, disclaimed any merit on this score, and expressed my sympathy for the loss he had sustained, and by which he seemed so deeply affected.

“Maybe,” rejoined he, “the death o’ an auld man, aboon threescore and ten, can hardly be called a loss, to a brither that hadna seen nor spoken to him, for mair than forty years. Death has now separated us for ever; but there was a separation between us worse than death while he lived. We were brithers, Cyril, but ye may be ken we were never friends. The strife o’ blood relations is no like the enmity of ither folk. It

cuts deeper, and the wounds it leaves are cankered and ill to cure. I needna tell you how our difference began, though till now I have aye thocht the wyte o't didna lie wi' me. Nae matter for that now. Yet, as God knows my heart, had I been in his place, and he left like me, a penniless and younger brother, we might have lived and died in love and charity."

As he said this, the old man turned from me in the bed, seemingly in strong emotion, and a silence of some minutes ensued. I assured him of my sincere sympathy in his sorrow, but requested him not to dwell on a subject which occasioned such deep agitation.

"It's a relief to me to speak," rejoined he, "and my heart feels easier when disburdened of its load. To naebody on this wide earth but you hae I ever spoken o' my troubles. May you never feel, Cyril, the pangs and the reproaches under which I now suffer, from the dourness of my own heart. He was unkind, but I was hard and unforgiving. Nay, were he even now to appear before me in the flesh, I fear I might still turn from him in anger. But he is gone before his Maker, where I must

shortly follow him, and resentment cannot reach beyond the grave, though mine, God forgive me, has followed him till his."

Here his voice was again choked, and he turned himself once more toward the wall and was silent. I too was agitated. There is a blind propensity in our nature, to participate in deep emotion of any kind, and I felt its influence at that moment. To a spirit so perturbed, I felt it would be impertinent in me to offer either condolence or consolation. I took the old man's hand, and pressed it in mine; and when, after a considerable interval, he again turned towards me, I saw that the veins of his forehead were turgid, and his eyes bloodshot. For some hours I sat by his bed-side, and he became gradually calmer, and the storm by which he had before been so powerfully stirred, at length subsided.

The task of making the necessary arrangements for the funeral devolved upon him, and I think he experienced relief from having it in his power to offer this, the last and only tribute to his departed brother.

By his dictation, I wrote to Bailie Cleland all suitable directions with regard to the conduct of the funeral; and letters of invitation having been prepared by one of the clerks, and signed by my uncle, were dispatched to all the friends of the family. It was likewise arranged, that on the Monday following, we should set out for Balmalloch in a mourning coach, in order to attend the obsequies of the Laird.

CHAPTER XI.

But when return'd the youth? The youth no more
Return'd exulting to his native shore ;
But fifty years elapsed, and then there came
A worn-out man.

CRABBE.

With easy roads he came to Leicester,
And lodged in the Abbey.

Henry VIII.

IN a few days, the shock occasioned to my uncle by his brother's death, in a great measure subsided. His sorrow, if it did not pass away, was at least calm and silent, and the tortures of self-reproach, under which he had at first suffered so deeply, gradually softened into feelings of melancholy regret. He did not again speak on the subject of his brother ; little change was observable in his deportment, and his countenance gave no indication of internal suffering.

On the morning fixed for our departure, I breakfasted with Mr Spreull, and the meal was

scarcely concluded, when the arrival of the mourning coach, which was to convey us to our destination, was duly announced. The vehicle in question was one of preposterous dimensions, apparently crazy from age, and drawn by two long-tailed black horses, which would have done no discredit to the team of the Newcastle wagon. The driver was a red-faced and facetious-looking person, suitably clad in sables, and mounted on a coach-box decorated by a hammer-cloth of black calico. The work of packing the baggage in the carriage now commenced, under the special superintendence of Girzy and myself. Mine consisted only of a small portmanteau, and was easily disposed of. This was not the case, however, with my uncle's. I could scarcely refrain from laughing, when my servant and Sanders MacAuslan appeared laboriously descending the narrow stairs, bearing with difficulty between them an enormous hair-trunk, about the size of a meal-girnel, fortified at every corner with iron plates, and the letters D. S. conspicuously traced in brass nails on the lid. Honest Jehu stood aghast at this unlooked-for addition to his load, and appeared

sorely puzzled as to the mode in which the transit of this ponderous appendage was to be effected.

While we were yet engaged in such meditations as may be supposed to have occupied Mr Belzoni when he first contemplated the removal of the Memnon, our cogitations were interrupted by the appearance of my uncle, who came to inspect the travelling arrangements.

“Deevil tak the woman,” exclaimed he, exasperated at the heavy marching trim in which the faithful Girzy was about to dispatch him; “why, here’s baggage enough for a regiment of heavy horse. Do ye think, born tawpy as ye are, that I’m gaun a voyage to the Indies? Why, that kist’s about half freight for an American lumber-ship. Just tak it back, and pit me up a change o’ linen in a napkin. I declare the woman’s little better than a bedlamite!”

Against the execution of these orders Girzy strongly entered her protest. She declared she would on no account allow him to travel at this season of the year, so slenderly provided with necessaries as he desired. To do so, she said, would be a wilful tempting of Providence. Who

could tell that he might not be seized with one of those attacks of cramp in the stomach, to which he was so liable. He might get wet and require a change of clothes. He might—— But it is unnecessary to follow Girzy through all her supposed cases of contingent misfortune. She concluded, however, by positively declaring, that the things could not now possibly be unpacked ; but were that even practicable, the trunk contained not one iota that could be spared. As a proof of this, she said it contained “ only nine couls, a dizen sarks, fifteen——”

“ Nine couls, and a dizen sarks !” exclaimed my uncle, impetuously interrupting her ; “ do ye think, gowk, gomeril, and idiot, as ye are, that I can use nine couls, and a dizen sarks in twa days ! But there’s nae use in speaking to a senseless tawpy, that can neither understand reason nor common sense ;” and he walked away in anger, leaving Girzy mistress of the field, and still determined to carry into full execution her schemes for the comfort of her master. After some delay, the trunk, which had been the subject of so much perplexity and contention, was with difficulty placed on the roof of the

coach, where it was secured by about twenty yards of new rope, which Saunders M'Auslan provided for the occasion. This addition gave the vehicle a singular and picturesque appearance, which on the journey did not fail to attract abundance of attention.

At length the carriage was reported ready. Peter (for such was the coachman's name) had already mounted the box, and my servant who was to accompany us, stood with his hand on the carriage door, ready to enclose us in its lugubrious cavity. But the cares and importunate anxieties of Girzy still impeded our departure. She had succeeded by her eloquence, in prevailing on my growling companion, to invest his legs in a huge pair of galligaskins of her own knitting, and to encase his higher regions in the greatcoat and comforter, from which I had on a previous occasion suffered so severely. Fortunately for me, the establishment boasted no duplicates of the latter articles, but this was not the case with regard to the galligaskins. A second pair was speedily produced, with which I was forced to decorate my person, as the only condition of my peaceable

departure. The invention of Girzy, too, was not slow in discovering a succedaneum for a greatcoat, in her scarlet duffle cloak, which, without unnecessary parlance, she threw across my shoulders, and tied carefully in front. Making a merit of necessity, I submitted with a good grace, and in this trim proceeded to the carriage, aware that I should there speedily enjoy the means of ridding myself of these encumbrances, without obstruction. Girzy, followed by Jenny, descended to the street to see us seated in the carriage. Before we were suffered to enter it, however, its scanty appliances for comfort underwent a rigid examination. "Hoot, tout," exclaimed Girzy, feeling the seat-cushions as she spoke, "this will never do! Jenny, rin up and fesh twa cods frae the bed;—just wait awee," continued she, addressing my uncle, "for ye ken sharp banes and hard brods are but ill neebours."

Here the old gentleman lost all patience, and his eyes glittered with passion.

"As I've a soul to be saved," exclaimed he, in a voice more than usually gruff and discordant; "as I've a soul to be saved, if either you

or her, that's sumph enough to do your bidding, offers to come near me wi' cods, or ony ither sic nonsense, ye shall fin' the weight o' my staff on your crown.—Come awa, Cyril, loup in, for the woman wad rouse the corruption of Job himsel."

I obeyed, and was instantly followed by my uncle.

"Will ye no hae a blanket to keep your legs warm?" inquired Girzy, still perseveringly intent on her unwelcome demonstrations of kindness, and poking her head into the carriage as she spoke.

"Steek the door, and be d—d to you," was the only answer vouchsafed to her query; and the coach at length getting fairly into motion, Girzy's parting injunction, "Poo up the glasses, for the wind's snell," was half drowned by the rattling of the wheels as they whirled over the causeway.

We were four hours in reaching Dumbarton, but the scenery through which our road lay was so beautiful, that I did not regret the slowness of our progress. In my journey down, I had passed the border after night-fall; and as the

mail reached Glasgow by day-dawn on the following morning, I had till now seen nothing of Scotland, but that city and its vicinity.

Every object, therefore, of the landscape around me possessed the charm of novelty, in addition to its own natural attractions, and I now for the first time gazed on scenery, than which the most vivid creations of my youthful fancy were not more impregnated with beauty.

I had never seen before, and I have never seen since, any river which for natural beauty can stand in competition with the Clyde, along the northern bank of which our journey lay. Never did stream glide more gracefully to the ocean, through a fairer region. The scenery of the Thames above London is occasionally beautiful, but the beauty is of a tamer and less striking character. It is one which I, at least, can regard without any deep or lofty emotion, which never haunts me in my dreams, nor rises unbidden to my memory in distant lands. There Art divides the palm with Nature, and the latter must be satisfied to wear but half the diadem.

For the first few miles of our journey, the scenery, though rich, was not peculiarly striking.

The surface of the country was varied only by gentle undulations, like the bosom of a summer sea, when the wind which agitated its waters has died away. But as we advanced, the hills became gradually more lofty; rugged and precipitous rocks gave occasional variety to the scene, and everything indicated our approach to a more mountainous and sterile country. At length the Castle of Dumbarton, on its pyramid of solid rock, rose in stern grandeur to the view, and on our arrival at the Inn, I was not sorry to learn that a halt of two hours was considered necessary, as an opportunity was thus afforded me of visiting this ancient and interesting fortress. Finding my uncle by no means disposed to join in the excursion, I sallied forth alone, and by the assistance of the parish "Betharel," who acted likewise in the capacity of Cicerone to strangers visiting the Castle, found no difficulty in the gratification of my curiosity. Not the least interesting object that I beheld that morning, was the sword of the stalworth and heroic Sir William Wallace; and, unable as my feeble arms were to wield it aloft, I yet felt pleasure in grasping its massive hilt, and re-

peating the beautiful invocation of John Finlay, beginning—

“Thou sword of true valour, though dim be thy hue,
And all faded thy flashes of light.”

The view from the summit of the Castle was beautiful and extensive. On the opposite side of the Firth was Greenock and its forest of shipping, the shore studded with villas, and far down, and scarce distinguishable to the eye, the blue mountains of Bute mingled with the horizon. Roseneath Castle, and its beautifully wooded isthmus, formed a prominent object of the nearer landscape; and high up among the clouds, towering in solitary grandeur, rose the snowy peak of Benlomond. But I had little time to bestow on objects of mere pictorial beauty, and aware of the irritable disposition of my companion, hurried back to the Inn, fearing that my protracted absence might in some measure have disorganized the arrangements for the journey.

On my arrival, however, I fortunately found this had not been the case. My uncle was placidly engaged in reading the newspapers; and the steeds being declared by the driver to be sufficiently refreshed, we once more entered

the mourning coach, and set forward on our journey.

Our course now diverged from its former direction into the interior of the country, and we caught occasional glimpses of the river Leven, a beautiful and rapid stream, immortalized in tuneful song. My uncle, who had been silent and abstracted during the first part of our journey, now became more communicative. It is true, he had no great taste for the sublime and beautiful; and the objects to which he was generally anxious to direct my attention, were not those in which I was inclined to feel the greatest interest. "That," said he, pointing to a large building on the banks of the Leven,— "that is the printfield of Tod and Shortridge; and there, aboot a mile ayont it, are the works of Dalquhurn. Now ye get a keek o' a yellow house through the trees; that's Cordale, just a wee paradise o' a place, where the shrubs and the grass are clippit twice a-week, and the plants against the wa', just look as if they were kaimed and brushed every morning. Mony a funny and a happy day hae I spent there in auld times."

We now approached Loch-Lomond ; and as we did so, I became more occupied with the remarkable objects which presented themselves as we advanced, and less attentive to my uncle's details. The influence of the scene, however, was not wholly unfelt even by him.

The old gentleman became silent, and gazing across the waters, embedded in the vast amphitheatre of hills, kept his eyes fixed on the rugged side of Benlomond, as if the more distant and sterner features of the scene were more congenial to his spirit than the softer beauties of the nearer landscape.

Evening was now fast approaching, and our progress had been so slow, that it was declared by Peter impossible to reach the point of our destination within the compass of anything like "timeous hours." It was judged necessary, therefore, that we should pass the night at Luss, and set out at an early hour on the following morning for Balmalloch, which was still thirteen miles distant.

Night had set in before we reached the inn of Luss. The family were evidently unprepared for so unwonted a circumstance as the arrival

of guests after night-fall, at this season of the year. A Scottish country inn is but a bad house of entertainment at any time ; but, taken at such a disadvantage, the probable cheer of guests unexpected as we were, may be safely calculated at a point not far transcending zero. When questioned with regard to his accommodations, the landlord was evidently at a nonplus, and confessed the poverty of his larder with more ingenuousness than is at all customary with his more southern brethren, when occasionally involved in a similar dilemma. We were not disposed, however, to be very exorbitant in our demands ; and understanding that the bill of fare consisted only of eggs and a rasher, directions were instantly given for their expeditious preparation.

We were at first ushered into the kitchen, where the family were assembled round a large peat fire, until another apartment could be prepared for our reception. This was soon done by a smart and pretty-looking girl, whose activity and exertions for our comfort were noticed favourably by my companion, who patted her on the back, and saluted her with the endearing

appellation of "a braw sonsie lassie." Her speedy appearance with the supper tended to increase still more the benignity of his regards, and he observed to me in a whisper, "My troth, Cyril, but that's a clever quean."

Never was meal dispatched with greater relish. The old gentleman tossed over, as with a pitchfork, about a dozen of eggs and a couple of pounds of bacon, with incredible dispatch; and the sharpness of the mountain air made me almost regard with envy his unparalleled facility of deglutition. I followed him, however, if not *passibus æquis*, at least with a pertinacity and endurance of appetite, more than sufficient to save my distance; and though I only ranked second in the race, it certainly was not *longo intervallo*. With respect to potables, we had no reason to complain. Ale, porter, and the genuine "mountain-dew," were all that heart could desire in such a situation, and with these the landlord's cellar was copiously furnished.

With such appliances to good fellowship, we grew mutually communicative and agreeable, and I had fairly got into the middle of a lecture

on drags, bag-foxes, covers, double ditches, and five-barred gates, notwithstanding sundry signals of somnolency exhibited by the old gentleman; when he at length interrupted my discourse by observing, "What's a' that ye've been speaking about, Cyril, for the last half hour? for, to say the truth, I've been sae overcome wi' drowsiness, I havena heard yae word ye've been saying. Just begin wi' your story again, and tell me a' about it."

Under such circumstances, this obliging invitation was declined, and the chambermaid was summoned to show us to our sleeping apartments. This was a summary proceeding; for the damsel aforesaid, on receiving our directions, merely opened the doors of what had till now appeared to be two closets in the wall of the supper-chamber, and informed us, that in these crevices we were to find our accommodation for the night. This arrangement appeared neither to surprise nor discomfit my uncle, who directed his trunk to be brought up to the apartment. This, however, was found impracticable. In the first place, it would have been an operation of extreme difficulty to remove it from the elevated po-

sition it at present occupied, on the roof of the coach. In the second place, we were assured that the stair was considerably too narrow to afford a passage for this unwieldy appendage. The old gentleman, therefore, was obliged to content himself with uttering a few hearty curses on Girzy and her officiousness, and to receive from my portmanteau such temporary accommodation as its comparative poverty could afford. These matters were soon arranged; the beds were apparently clean, and the loud and sonorous snoring of my companion soon gave evidence of his being wrapt in slumber.

By sunrise we were again upon the road. I beheld his first rays gild the summits of the mountains, and watched his increasing altitude, till the bosom of the Loch at once received and reflected the full glory of his effulgence. It was a sight of memorable beauty. Our route lay along the margin of the Loch, till we reached Tarbert; but here we struck into another and less-frequented road, which wound for several miles through the deep and solitary passes of the surrounding mountains. I never travelled on a more execrable road. Large masses of

granite were scattered on its surface, and opposed most unpleasant and dangerous obstruction to the passage of a carriage; and it was intersected at numerous points by small mountain streams, which had worn deep channels in its bed. With such obstacles, our progress was necessarily slow, and to ease our bones, which already ached with the jolting they had endured, we determined to proceed on foot to Balmalloch, which was distant but a mile or two.

Every object that now presented itself, appeared linked in my uncle's mind with the recollections of his youth. As we proceeded, he pointed out to me the rivers where he had delighted to fish,—the woods in which he hunted the roe,—the hills where he had shot the ptarmigan, or chased the wild deer. An absence of half a century had apparently blunted no feeling, obliterated no early association. He had quitted these scenes, a poor and almost friendless boy, he now returned to them an aged and a wealthy man. It is true, there had been a dreary interval between, which, perhaps, he would then willingly have forgotten. But it could not be. The objects he beheld around

him, were all indissolubly united with the memory of youthful vigour, and enjoyment unalloyed by the worldly cares and anxieties, which, in later and less happy days, had preyed on his heart. His youth and age were not “bound each to each, by natural sympathy;” there appeared nothing in the scenes around him, to link together those distant periods of his life, to connect the thoughtless and happy boy, with the infirm and grey-headed visitant of these mountain regions. The objects he again beheld, could not but suggest to him the contrast of what he then was, and what he had been in former days, nor fail to embitter the consciousness of present feebleness with the memory of past power. How forcibly and how naturally are the melancholy associations of youth remembered in age, expressed in the following stanzas of Wordsworth:—

“ Down to the vale this water steers,
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow, as now it flows.

“ And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think,
How oft a vigorous man I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

“ Mine eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr’d,
For the same sound is in mine ears,
Which in those days I heard.

“ Thus fares it still in our decay ;
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what it takes away,
Than what it leaves behind.”

Perhaps I am fanciful in attributing to the old gentleman such feelings as I have now attempted to describe ; for certainly he did not express them. I could only observe, as he gazed around him, an uneasy wandering of the eye, and certain sudden and abrupt pauses in his hurried and animated descriptions of the different objects that presented themselves as we advanced.

We now approached a small village, or what, in the vernacular language of the country, is termed a Clachan. Every ragged urchin in the place was abroad to see us pass. Their mothers, too, desisted for a while from their household occupations, and peeped forth on us from door or cranny, and aged grandsires, seated on stone benches by the road, or supporting their tottering limbs with a staff, respectfully veiled their bonnets, and saluted us in Gaelic. The sound

seemed for a moment to stir the heart of my uncle like the blast of a trumpet. On hearing it, he stopped suddenly short, drew a long breath, and made an answer in the same language. I thought he gazed on the aged countenances around him, as if trying to recognise among them some of the "old familiar faces" he remembered in his youth. No signs of recognition, however, took place on either side, and having passed the Clachan, the road entered a very thriving plantation, which, I was informed, constituted part of the "policy" of Balmalloch. A rude gate, formed of wood covered with the bark, admitted us to an approach of a few hundred yards in length, which led directly to the house.

It was a dark stone building, of that order of architecture which Highland lairds appear to consider most akin to beauty, and rose in the majestic form of an inverted chest of drawers. Slow as our progress had been, we had outstripped the coach, and consequently, the family had not yet received notice of our approach. The door of the mansion stood open; but my uncle, who apparently did not wish to take advantage of the facility of entrance thus afforded, prefer-

red giving notice of our presence by a sonorous application of his walking-stick. The signal was speedily answered by a female servant in mourning, who, on receiving intimation of our names, ushered us into a small parlour, and retired to give information of our arrival to her mistress. On her departure, my uncle cast a quick and hurried glance round the apartment, and then retiring to a window, stood there, either occupied in silent meditation, or in gazing on the objects without.

After a short interval, the maid again made her appearance, and said her mistress would be happy to receive us up stairs. We were accordingly ushered up to the apartment of the ladies. On our entrance, we were received by the mistress of the house, who removed a white handkerchief from her eyes, and addressed my uncle in plaintive accents :—

“ I’m happy to see you at Balmalloch, Mr Spreull, and you too, Mr Thornton. Oh, but this is a hard and a sair dispensation upon us a’ ! A sair bereavement, Mr Spreull, for his poor widow and children ; but it is aye a comfort, as Dr M’Craik says, that he has exchan-

ged this sinfu' world for anither and a better, though, hech sirs, it's a waesome loss to them he's left ahint him in this vale of tears !”

To this lachrymatory address the old gentleman felt it incumbent on him to make some reply ; and while he was engaged in delivering his tribute of condolence, I had time to glance round the apartment and observe the company. Mrs Spreull appeared to be a hale and florid old lady, whose health had by no means suffered from her recent affliction ; and having said and done on the occasion all that she considered suitable and becoming, her five daughters next came forward to welcome their relatives. The epithet *young*, applied by their mother to these ladies, appeared to me exceedingly gratuitous. In truth, they constituted a series of mature virgins, of whom the youngest could scarcely be under thirty, nor the oldest less than fifteen years her senior. As they successively greeted their uncle, Mrs Spreull announced their names. “ That’s Peggy, your auldest niece. She’s been sair fashed a’ this bygane winter wi’ the lumbago. That’s Jean, my second daughter ; and that’s David, your namesake ; and that’s Archy ;

and that's Thomasina, the youngest, she's aye been reckoned the very image of you; and the poor Laird used to like her the best for that reason."

The masculine names of some of these ladies occasioned, on my part, some surprise. But I was afterwards informed that it is by no means uncommon, especially in the Highlands, to bestow on girls the name of any male relative, whom it may be considered prudent to propitiate by such an incongruous demonstration of respect.

Mrs Spreull now requested a private audience of my uncle, with the view of speaking "anent the funeral ceremonial," the time appointed for which was now at hand. The old folks accordingly retired, leaving us younger ones, who were all included in the general appellation of "bairns," alone in the apartment. I entered into conversation with my fair cousins. I found that all of them were good-natured, and several not wanting in a certain rustic intelligence. The melancholy circumstances of the family, of course, imposed restraint both upon the manner and the matter of our intercourse. It

was frequently interrupted, too, by the entrance of female servants, who whispered, generally loud enough to be heard, some new and pressing necessity of the establishment, or unexpected misfortune in the kitchen. Each of these messages occasioned the exit of one of these matronly virgins, who, judiciously, had not deemed it necessary to merge their attentions to the living in their duties to the dead. My uncle did not return, and conceiving that my presence, in the pressure of these household duties, might be an inconvenient restraint, I begged permission to retire to my apartment, in order to arrange my toilet previous to the melancholy ceremony, the hour of which the striking of the house-clock announced to be at hand.

CHAPTER XII.

Let such honours
And funeral rites, as to his birth and virtues
Are due, be first perform'd.

DENHAM'S *Sophy*.

ON descending, I found my uncle in the large apartment destined for the reception of the funeral guests, a few of whom had already assembled. The chairs were closely ranged round the room, in order to afford as much accommodation as possible to the large party who were expected to grace the funeral of the Laird. The sideboard supported a cold round of beef, and a mutton-ham, flanked by whisky on one side, and wine on the other. My uncle occupied the chair nearest the door, and I was directed to fill the one immediately on his right. He rose from his seat, and bowed on the entrance of every new guest, who now arrived in such numbers as speedily to throng the apartment. Unaffected as I was by any strong regret for the death

of a person whom I had never seen, it was not entirely without curiosity that I regarded the scene around me. A deep silence, broken only by an occasional cough or blowing of the nose, reigned in the apartment. Every countenance was moulded into a most lugubrious expression ; and in moving to their seats, the guests walked as if treading on eggs. All eyes were bent on the ground, and not a whisper of conversation was suffered to enliven the general and pervading gloom of the meeting. The silence was first broken by one of the undertaker's men, who entered, and pronounced in a sonorous voice, "The Rev. Dr M'Craik of Auchterfechan will ask a blessing."

This call was obeyed, and a long prayer repeated by the Doctor ; after which, wine, and whisky, and biscuits, were circulated round the apartment by the servants. Suddenly the stillness which had reigned till now was changed into clamour and vociferation. "Mr Spreull, your good health."—"Your good health, Mr Thornton," burst from a hundred voices at once, in every variety of loud and discordant intonation. "Drumshinty, here's to ye."—"Gar-

scud, your health.”—“ Glenscadden, better health to your wife.”

When the noise and bustle had in some degree subsided, following the example of my uncle, I rose, and bowing round the room, drank the health of the assembled guests. Many of these had come from a considerable distance, and now gave proof of the sharpness of the mountain air, by the ferocity of their attack on the solids displayed on the sideboard. Of these assailants, I was one. We had neglected the precaution of breakfasting at Luss before starting, and since last night's supper my abstinence had been unbroken. It would have been indecorous in my uncle to have betrayed any symptoms of appetite on so mournful an occasion ; though, from the occasional direction of his glances towards the theatre of action, it struck me he would, under other circumstances, have been well satisfied to become a participator in our labours.

The repast was briefly dispatched, and another minister, whose designation I cannot recall, was called on to return thanks. This he did in a pithy prayer and exhortation ; after

which, preparations immediately commenced for the progress to the churchyard. This was not distant above a mile, and the procession was on foot.

The body was carried on the shoulders of six stout Highlanders, and the piper of the family played a coronach, or lamentation for the deceased, as we advanced, which, wakening the echoes of the high and solitary hills through which we passed, had a solemn and impressive effect. My uncle, with little apparent indication of deep emotion, followed his brother's head to the grave. The other pall-bearers were myself and the Lairds before-mentioned of Lam-lash, Garscud, Drumshinty, and Glenscadden. As we passed, the whole population of the neighbourhood appeared to line the road, a procession so splendid being evidently no every-day occurrence. The shepherd veiled his bonnet and looked down on us bare-headed from the hill, and the lambkins of his flock, which had sportively approached the road, as if to gaze on the passing wonder, darted off on our approach, half in fear, half in the wildness of their glee, to their bleating dams in the uplands.

The church towards which our steps were directed, stood the solitary tenant of a mountain glen. It was a small, rude, and unornamented structure, built of the masses of granite which had fallen from the rock, or been gathered from the bed of the stream. It was only distinguishable from an ordinary dwelling-house, by the projection of a small belfry from the roof, and the absence of all external sign of human habitation. The church-yard, in the midst of which it stood, was surrounded by a low wall, or rather what is called in Scotland a "drystane dyke," and contained few external marks to denote it a place of sepulture. Few of the graves could boast a headstone, and fewer still an inscription, and but for the obtrusive pretensions of a large obelisk-shaped monument, erected, as the stone bore testimony, by an inconsolable widow of the neighbourhood to her beloved and lamented husband, it presented nothing to arrest the casual glances of the passer by.

In this unpretending receptacle, the burying place of the Spreulls was separated from those of the meaner parishioners, only by an iron railing, and its site was plainly indicated by the new-dug

grave. Within its precincts did we deposit the remains of the Laird of Balmalloch, with that absence of all ceremony in which rigid presbytery delights. Neither in advancing across the church-yard to the grave, nor when the tressels were removed, and we finally committed the body to the gaping earth, could I detect any visible accession of emotion in the countenance or deportment of my uncle. But when this last duty was performed, and as a parting mark of respect, the company had uncovered, and stood bareheaded for a brief and mournful space, and the death-music, if I may so call it, of the clods rattling on the coffin, broke harshly the surrounding silence, then, and then only, did I observe a convulsive shudder pass over the frame and the countenance of the old gentleman. It seemed to come suddenly as a shock of electricity, and to pass like one, for in an instant it was gone, and he stood calm, rigid, and unmoved as before.

We remained, as is the custom, in the church-yard, till the grave-diggers had completed their task, and then turned homeward. My uncle walked alone, and as I did not think proper at

such a time to intrude my society on him, I was not displeased to have an opportunity of gratifying my curiosity by entering into conversation with some of the Highland lairds as we returned to Balmalloch. There was no want of cordiality in the address of these gentlemen.

“A sad office ye’ve come upon, Mr Thornton,” said Mr Lamont of Drumshinty, rather a hard-featured old gentleman, with a powdered head and an enormous queue; “I didna expect to have laid Balmalloch in the moulds for these ten years to come. Why, it’s just a fortnight come Friday since he dined at the half-yearly meeting at Dumbarton—I never saw him better in my life, nor make a better use of baith glass and knife and fork. Neither he, Auchintulie, nor myself, went to bed afore twa in the morning, though Balmalloch, to be sure, for twa or three hours before that, just sat in his chair and dozed like a peerie. Poor man, he’s really a loss to the country, and his worthy widow must find a sair want o’ him.”

In these sentiments the other lairds appeared very cordially to join, and I gathered from the context of the dialogue, that my deceased rela-

tion was one of those very worthy persons, whose character admits of praise in the gross, but affords no prominence sufficiently tangible for eulogium in the detail.

On our return to the house, it was not difficult to discern that arrangements were making for a splendid banquet. The savoury steams of roast and stew, mingled with other less prominent culinary odours, pervaded the mansion from the cellar to the attics, and the whole establishment were evidently engaged in active preparations for the entertainment of a large party. A funeral in the less populous districts of Scotland, is always followed by a feast, and the walls, which in the morning heard but the voice of grief and wailing, at evening generally echo the sounds of Bacchanalian merriment.

While the guests were amusing themselves, some by conversing in the drawing-room, (if a small and rather rudely-furnished apartment may be so called,) and others by strolling into the fields, and examining the condition of the cattle and the barn-yard, I received a message from my uncle, to desire my presence at the ceremony of opening the will.

On obeying, I found the ladies of the family, my uncle, Dr M'Craik the parish minister, and Mr MacFie, the writer from Dumbarton, all assembled, and ready to proceed to business. The grief of the ladies appeared to have sustained some accession since I last saw them. They were all decorously seated with handkerchiefs at their eyes, and frequent sobs and long-drawn sighs gave evidence of the intensity of their sorrow. Mr MacFie now proceeded to open the scrutoire of the deceased, and search for the important document in question. After some rummaging among charters of infeftment, instruments of sasine, heritable bonds, account sales of cattle and black-faced sheep, it was discovered and read aloud. It directed, in case of the testator dying without male issue, that the estate of Balmalloch should be sold, and the interest of the proceeds equally divided among his daughters: To his widow he bequeathed an annuity of three hundred a-year, in addition to the sum to which she was already entitled by her marriage-settlement. The trustees appointed by the testator, were Provost Aulay MacAulay of Dumbarton (probably a descendant of the very

amusing personage commemorated by my friend Galt;) his brother David, to whom, in token of forgiveness of his unchristian and unbrotherly conduct, he bequeathed his bamboo cane and horn snuff-box, adorned by a Scotch pebble on the lid; and his old friend, Peter Murdoch of Glasgow, a very worthy and influential merchant of that city, to whose use the sum of five guineas was directed to be appropriated, for the purchase of a mourning-ring. The laird, it appeared, died rich. An inventory of his property found among his papers, showed it to amount to something over £15,000, exclusive of the estate, which might be expected to produce nearly double that sum. Altogether, therefore, my fair cousins were to be regarded as heiresses, perhaps the greatest in the whole county of Dumbarton, a distinction, on which it would argue more than female humility, to suppose they did not pride themselves.

The business of reading the will being concluded, another, almost equally important, succeeded on the tapis. It was now the hour of dinner, and on our return to the drawing-room, we found the party assembled in tolerable force.

It consisted chiefly of those persons of whom mention has already been made, a considerable body of lairds, whose names I have forgotten, the doctor, and man of business.

The dinner was plentiful, and well suited to the character of the guests. The ladies, of course, did not appear, and the honours of the table were performed by my uncle, by whose orders I acted as croupier. Unluckily the primary duties of the office thus imposed on me, consisted in carving a huge round of beef, on which the demands of the company were more numerous and frequent than my strenuous exertions were capable of supplying. My toil indeed seemed “never ending, still beginning,” for my tormentors returned pertinaciously to the charge, and round of beef was voted by the whole party as the *ne plus ultra* of good living, especially when garnished, as in the present case, with the decorative adjuncts of turnips and cabbage.

“Bless me,” at length said an old red-faced gentleman on my right, laying down his knife and fork after the discussion of four platefuls of beef,—“bless me, Mr Thornton, ye’re getting

nae dinner—I've but a small appetite and am doing nothing, so pray let me assist you and take that round off your hands."

I did not hesitate a moment in accepting this welcome offer of assistance, and gladly consigned the remains of the dish to the care of my ruby-visaged neighbour. With regard to my own dinner, the board was all before me where to choose, and really choice was not very difficult at an entertainment which could boast salmon of the very finest quality, and profusion of grouse, ptarmigan, and black game. These were luxuries, however, too common in this quarter to be much prized, and in the estimation of the present company, evidently yielded the pas to dishes of much lower pretension, and more vulgar name.

While dinner was on the board, and the servants remained in the apartment, everything went on with regularity and decorum. My uncle did the honours of the table with a degree of propriety and good-breeding, for which, to say the truth, all I had hitherto seen of him had not prepared me. From a coarse and vulgar humourist, habituated to the unrestrained

indulgence of every whim and peculiarity, he was now become a finished gentleman of the old school; equal in all respects, superior in some, to the best of those by whom he was surrounded.

There does, or perhaps rather there *did*, exist in Scotland a strong and undisguised dislike between the landed and the mercantile interests. The former, of course, consider their trading rivals as beings of an inferior caste, and are inclined to regard both them and their pursuits with a contempt and aversion which they are at little pains either to qualify or conceal. The latter feeling, if not the former, is not unreturned by the men of trade, who profess themselves equal in all respects to their aced antagonists, and are little disposed to conciliate them by any supererogatory demonstrations of respect. Little intercourse, therefore, is generally kept up between these bodies; the pride of the traders feeling sorely outraged by the aristocratic haughtiness of the lairds, and the lairds waxing very wroth at the vulgar and ostentatious luxury affected by their purse-proud rivals. I mention this for the purpose of showing, that on the present

occasion my uncle had rather a difficult part to play, in presiding at an entertainment composed of country gentlemen, and in which he was the only person present connected with the pursuits of commerce.

The first toast given from the chair of course was the King. The Laird of Arn Craik then proposed the health of Mrs Spreull, and the ladies of the family, to which toast my uncle returned thanks, and expressed his acknowledgments to those gentlemen who had conferred honour on the family, by their attendance on the funeral of his deceased brother.

These formal preliminaries being passed, the meeting soon began to assume something of a more hilarious character. The bottles circulated rapidly, the solemn circumstances connected with the entertainment were forgotten, and the funeral banquet might easily have been mistaken by an uninitiated observer, for a marriage feast.

Nothing pleases a boy so much, as to find himself placed among men, in a situation of some consequence and authority. I felt this on the present occasion, filling, as I did, the impor-

tant office of vice-president or croupier. My spirits became elevated, I drank bumpers, acted as toast-master, pushed about the bottles, and proposed fining more than one individual in a bumper, for filling on a heeltap. These sallies were well received, and drew on me the eulogiums of many of the party, who began to fear, that they would not find in the example of my uncle either a stimulus or excuse, for that excess to which they were desirous of extending their potations ; and were glad, therefore, to avail themselves of my example on the occasion. Much discourse on the prices of black cattle, many discussions on the state of county politics, and facetious stories at the expense of eccentric and unpopular neighbours, were interrupted by my noisy and obtrusive discharge of my functions. I made speeches, and roared catches of songs, slapped elderly gentlemen on the back, called them hearty old cocks, and was guilty of a thousand extravagances, the offspring of a brain heated by powerful and unwonted stimulants.

Suddenly I remember my sight grew dim, and there was a loud rushing as if of many

waters in my ears. The room, the company, table, bottles, glasses, all danced before my eyes, and were whirled rapidly round as if in a vortex. A deadly sickness came over me, and a cold and clammy perspiration stood on my forehead. I rose and staggered to the door, followed by the smiles of the old stagers, who probably anticipated such a finale to the part I had been playing. With difficulty I reached the passage, on which I met one of the maids, whom I dispatched for my servant, but before he arrived I had fallen insensible on the stair.

When I came again to my recollection, I found myself in the apartment of the ladies, who were kind and assiduous in their attentions. One held a smelling-bottle to my nose, another bathed my temples with cold water, and the old lady had just denuded me of my neckcloth, and was opening my shirt-collar. I had been sick, very sick, and was altogether in a most pitiable predicament. In a short time, however, I recovered sufficient muscular power to enable me, with the assistance of Coker (my servant), to reach my own apartment, where

that trusty functionary, after assisting me to undress, deposited me in bed for the night.

Before I fell asleep, I remember the sounds of carousal were loud in my ears. The more seasoned vessels of the party below had now begun to feel the effects of the stimulus, under the influence of which I had succumbed, and the mingled noise of mirth and angry disputation echoed through the mansion. It came, however, softened by distance, like the fitful howlings of the wind, or the voice of the waves bursting afar off on the shore, acting as an efficacious somnolent on senses already stupified by over-excitement.

I slept like a top, and woke, as usual in such cases, with a parched throat and a burning brow. The morning sun shone brightly through my casement, and I determined to cool my fever by a walk before breakfast, and the enjoyment of the mountain breeze. I dressed, therefore, as quickly as possible, and descended the stair. The family were not yet risen, or at all events were not visible, and I encountered no one but the house-maid, busy in her matutinal vocation.

I was tempted *en passant* to take a cursory peep at the dining-room, which had been the scene of my last night's follies. It exhibited certainly a most deplorable spectacle. The relics of the carousal still remained unremoved. Everything was in confusion. The table was covered with jugs, bottles, and glasses, some partially filled, and many broken. A dish or two with the remains of salt herrings, and a vagrant fragment or two of oat-cake, showed of what the supper had consisted. The chairs, some overset and otherwise injured in the fray, were scattered round the apartment, which was redolent of a certain disgusting odour of debauchery, to be felt, not described: an effluvia particularly offensive to one, whose present feelings induced him to regard the orgies of the preceding night with disgust and nausea. Prostrate on the floor, with the hearth-rug rolled under his head for a pillow, lay one of the party fast asleep, snoring loudly. Another, wrapped in a tartan cloak, lay stretched on several chairs, which served him for a couch. He stared at me with a vacant look, and muttered some unintelligible sounds, which show-

ed that his faculties had not yet fully emerged from their eclipse.

To look on such objects was to behold dissipation *in puris naturalibus*, to catch drunkenness in dishabille. The scene carried with it a sort of obtrusive morality, not at such a moment very pleasant, and I gladly turned from it, to sally forth into the pure air of the morning.

The scenery around Balmalloch was wild and beautiful. The house stood near the foot of a mountain called The Cobbler, from some fantastic resemblance in its outline, certainly not obvious to an uninitiated eye. Near it there were other smaller and wooded hills, and a mountain stream which flowed through a deep and lonely dell, the precipitate and lofty banks of which were clothed with the birch and alder. Mountain scenery, in addition to its own natural and inherent beauty, was armed in my eyes with all the charms of novelty. It seemed as if now for the first time I learned to form conception of the sublimities of nature. I joyed in the acquisition of a new sense, and felt that an enlargement of my faculties had been coetaneous with my visit to Balmalloch.

I had spent fully two hours in wandering in the valleys, and on the hills, before I thought of returning to breakfast. Exercise had newstrung my nerves, and given more than its wonted edge to my appetite before I reached the house. I found the ladies in the breakfast-room, and a considerable congregation of the guests. It was impossible to meet the former without emotions of humiliation and shame, for the condition in which I had been indebted to their good offices on the night before. I stammered something of an apology, which they appeared to consider very unnecessary, and treated the whole affair as a trifle.

Their good nature afforded some relief to my sensibility on this subject, and enabled me to turn my attention from myself to those around me. In none of them were there observable any marks of indisposition, proceeding from the excesses of the preceding night. It is true, the eyes of several of the elderly gentlemen were a little bloodshot, but this symptom was accompanied by no apparent diminution either of appetite or vivacity.

The appearance of none of the party, however, had improved by their night's sojourn. Little attention had been devoted to the toilet; many had evidently not washed, none had undergone the supererogatory decoration of shaving. Their clothes, too, were unbrushed, and from the wool adhering to them, it was evident that several of the wearers had gone to bed without the ceremony of undressing.

But the breakfast!—Who has not heard of a Scotch breakfast? No one. But till now I had never beheld that (in England) trivial meal in all its native glory and attraction. Surely even the mouth of Apicius or Dr Kitchiner might venially water at the following bill of fare. Kipper, herrings fresh from Loch Long, pickled trouts, venison and mutton hams, cold grouse and ptarmigan, oat cakes, barley and flour scones, a large tureen of milk porridge (which appeared in considerable request), several kinds of sweetmeats, and a huge vessel charged with the genuine mountain dew. Could the eccentricity of human appetite devise any useful or agreeable addition to a banquet com-

posed of such ingredients? I imagine not—to me, at least, it appeared that

“ The force of fancy could no further go.”

But such a breakfast is a thing to dream of, not to describe; to be treasured up and survive unfading in the memory, not to be obtrusively emblazoned by pen or pica.

Suffice it, therefore, that due honour was done to the repast; that saddle-horses were brought to the door, and the tramontane guests gradually departed, singly or accompanied, till my uncle and myself were once more the only guests in Balmalloch.

CHAPTER XIII.

They say this town is full of cozenage,
 As—nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
 Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
 And many such like libertines of sin.

Comedy of Errors.

———Thou now exact'st the penalty,
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh.

Merchant of Venice.

THE day succeeding the funeral was spent by my uncle, in obtaining minute and accurate information relative to the state of the deceased Laird's affairs, and concerting the future arrangements of the family. In all matters of business and accounts, he was particularly clear-sighted and acute, and a few hours' application sufficed to furnish him with all the requisite information. Towards Mrs Spreull and her daughters, his manners and deportment were uniformly benevolent, and unmarked by any of those exacerbations of temper to which he was habitually liable. He showed an anxie-

ty to contribute, by every means in his power, to their comfort, and assured them, his best exertions would in no circumstances be wanting, for the promotion of their interest. Still, I could not but remark, that in his intercourse with these ladies, there was a calmness in his manner, and an utter absence of that warmth and cordiality with which from the first he had distinguished me. To me, who knew him, it was evident, that he considered himself engaged in the performance of a duty which he was called upon sacredly to discharge, but that he was not urged on to this, by any strong sentiment of personal regard. In truth, the old gentleman was not partial to the fair sex, and had an uncommon aversion to all elderly single ladies, a designation under which his nieces were not without some claim to be included. Yet there was nothing about them calculated to excite aversion. Good-natured they certainly were, perhaps a little vulgar and outré. But ridicule can only be attracted by pretension, and that quality was scarcely predicable of my fair cousins, as I saw them at Balmalloch.

While my uncle was busied in the examina-

tion of papers, I mounted a pony which had enjoyed a sinecure since the death of the Laird, and rode forth to enjoy, if possible, a more extended view of the beautiful scenery in the neighbourhood, than had come within the scope of my morning's ramble. Ignorant of the geography of the country, I left the choice of road to the taste and sagacity of the pony, and really the beauties of the one he selected, left me no reason to regret this proceeding. Nothing, I imagine, can be much more sublime than the valley of Glencroe, up which my steed directed his steps; in after life, at least, I have seen no spot which so powerfully excited my imagination. Scenery of features more desolate and gigantic—more indomitable to the influence of man—on which Nature has set more legibly the seal of eternal barrenness—where is it to be found?

Perhaps I have dwelt altogether too long on this short visit to the Highlands, unmarked as it must be to the reader, by any peculiarity of interest, and disproportioned in importance to many of the future scenes in which I must be called on to act and suffer. Yet these are the

portions of my life on which most I delight to dwell. They are armed with no sting,—they recall no melancholy remembrance,—no deep and poignant regret—such as are too inseparably linked with many of the busier and more active parts of my career. Bear with me, then, I pray you, gentle reader, when you find me dull and prosy, and inditing, for your punishment, long stories ending in nothing. I am given, I confess it, to a little tediousness and prolixity; yet, for the life of me, I can tell my story but in one way, and that way is my own.

The remainder of the day and evening, on my return to Balmalloch, passed heavily enough, notwithstanding the expressive glances of Miss Thomasina's eyes, and the lavished blandishments of her smiles. I remembered brighter eyes, and sweeter smiles, and was proof to the fire of her artillery. The next morning was fixed for our departure; and after partaking of another breakfast, similar in its attractions to the one already described, my uncle's huge trunk was once more elevated to the roof of the coach, and bidding adieu to the family at Balmalloch, we set out on our return.

The journey was attended with nothing remarkable; my uncle, between his naps, was comparatively pleasant and companionable, and we reached Glasgow shortly after dark. During the greater part of the last stage he had been involved in a sound slumber, to which I afforded no interruption, and it was not till we had passed the long and hideous suburbs by which Glasgow is on all sides surrounded, that his ideas were recalled by the flickering of the lamps, and the noise and jolting of the vehicle, as it leisurely advanced over the rough and ill-paved streets. There was apparently something congenial to the old gentleman's disposition, in the busy hum of men. His habits and predilections were strictly urbane; there was nothing rural in his cast of thought, and the noise and bustle of the city, (considerable even at so late an hour,) seemed to act as an instant stimulus in recalling his energies, and concentrating his ideas. The absence even of a day or two, appeared sufficient to invest the accustomed objects which he again beheld, with additional interest and novelty. As we passed, he gazed earnestly into every shop, and seemed as if endeavouring to

read in the countenances of the pedestrians who thronged the streets, whether any occurrence of importance had taken place during his absence.

The stopping of the carriage, at length indicated the completion of our journey. I cast my eyes upwards to the windows of the house, but all was veiled in darkness. The head of the faithful and attentive Girzy was not visible, as I expected it would have been, and not even the glimmer of a taper was discernible in the interior. The coachman descended from his box, and assisted us to alight, while my servant ascended the stair, to give notice to my uncle's dilatory domestics, of our arrival. On being released from durance vile (for vile durance travelling in such a vehicle literally was), we followed his steps, and found him battering loudly at the portal of the dwelling, without any signal being afforded of the presence of inhabitants within. "What's a' this?" vociferated my uncle as we gained the landing place of the stair. "What's come ower thae twa neer-do-weel kimmers, in the deevil's name? Are they fou' or asleep? Haud awa," said he

addressing the servant, “haud awa, and let me try to wauken up the guid-for-naething hizzies. I’s’e warrant I’s’e mak’ them hear on the deaf side o’ their heads.” So saying, he advanced to the door, and accompanied a sonorous application of the knocker with such ejaculations as the following, uttered in a key loud enough to have awakened the dead:—“Girzy, I say Girzy, open the door, ye limb o’ Satan! are we to be keepit here standin a’ night on the stair-head, while ye’re dosing like a tap? come and open the door directly, ye buckie of Belzebub.” To this emphatic adjuration no answer was returned, and a similar address to Jennv produced no greater effect.

It was now evident that both the females in question had evacuated the premises, and the anger of my uncle exceeded all bounds. In truth, his wrath was not without some shadow of excuse. Instead of a comfortable reception in his own house, to be denied admission altogether, and kept standing both cold and hungry on a common stair, when he reasonably calculated on enjoying the full restoration of his domestic comforts, might have afforded apology

for an unusual excitation of bile, in a person neither very choleric nor easily irascible. Provoking as the situation was, it was necessary to devise some expedient to mitigate its inconvenience. The first idea that suggested itself, was that of breaking open the door, and effecting forcible entrance. But *cui bono*? The house was untenanted, the fires probably extinguished, and the keys of everything, whether esculent or potable, in Mrs Girzy's pocket. This project, therefore, was speedily abandoned, and, after considerable deliberation, it was determined that the luggage should be deposited in a neighbouring shop, while we proceeded in quest of a comfortable supper to a tavern. My servant was directed to hover round the premises, and give the errant housekeeper the earliest possible notice of our return, and the inconvenience which her absence had occasioned. These arrangements being effected, we set forth in search of the Regency Tavern, (my uncle's favourite house of entertainment,) his indignation finding vent in frequent ebullitions by the way.

It is an old proverb, and I have generally

found it a true one, that misfortunes never come single, and the occurrences of this evening afforded no contradiction to the truth of the adage. We had not advanced above the length of a street or two, and my uncle had just got into the middle of a long and hearty imprecation on Girzy, and denunciation of those “deevil’s cantrips” which had led her abroad at so unseasonable an hour, when we encountered a fat, jolly-looking person, who immediately accosted my companion—“Bless me, Mr Spreull, is this you? a sight o’ you in the streets at this time o’ night, is a thing no seen yince in a twalmonth. I thocht ye had been awa *plantin* the Laird yer brither in the moul’s.” This address, the irreverent tone of which, it may be presumed, was not much in accordance either with his temper or feelings, still afforded an opening for the narrative of Girzy’s delinquency too favourable to be neglected. On learning that we were bound for the Regency, Baillie Lapslie (for so was this jolly gentleman designated,) immediately volunteered to join the party, an offer which my uncle, anxious to learn all the news, accepted.

Our supper was a good one, Mrs Golder, the landlady, civil and assiduous in her attentions, and Baillie Lapslie made several efforts at wit, which showed at least his inclination to be facetious. Whether the irritation of my uncle might or might not have yielded to a combination of such agréments, is, and must ever remain a moot point; for a new cause of discomposure was speedily interposed to prevent the restoration of his mental equanimity.

“ Well, Baillie,” said my uncle, while engaged in the act of compounding his first tumbler, “ ye maun tell us a’ the news. How did cottons go off at Wednesday’s sale? are bowedls looking up, and rum selling with more spirit than it did last week?—Is there anything in the Tontine list about the David Spreull, of whose arrival at Demerara I expected to hear before now? I ettle the underwriters are beginning to shake in their shoon about her. Four months since she left Greenock, and naething either seen or heard tell o’ her sin syne. Sorry would I be that ony ill had happened to her, though, in point of loss, I’m safe enough, for she’s weel ensured, baith ship, freight, and cargo.”

“ In regard to news,” returned Baillie Lapslie, “ there’s no muckle o’ ony kind, and little or no variation in the markets frae last week ; sugars may be a shade higher, and cottons a thocht lower, but nae change worth the mentioning. At the coffee-room this morning, naething was talked of, but the stoppage o’ Penny and Trotter, wha, they say, will not pay a shilling in the pound.”

“ Penny and Trotter !” exclaimed the old gentleman, in a loud and angry voice, his eyes flashing fire, and vehemently striking the table with his clenched fist,—“ Penny and Trotter bankrupts—ay, that’s what they may ca’ them in the Gazette,—but thieves, rogues, and swindlers, is what I’ll take care they shall be ca’ed everywhere else. Let them try to get a certificate frae me—let them see whether I’ll agree to their discharge—let them come, wi’ pitifu’ speech and long faces, yammerin and fleechin about their wives and young families, wi’ their offers o’ composition o’ yin, twa, three, ay, or even ten shillings in the pound, and see what comfort they’ll get frae me.”

I had never before seen his evil passions call-

ed so fully into play as at this moment. All the bitterness of his nature seemed to be collected in order to be discharged at once on the unfortunate Penny and Trotter. So unexpectedly had this violent ebullition broken forth, and so apparently uncalled for did it appear, that something of the ludicrous involuntarily mingled with it in my imagination. If I smiled however, it was unobserved, and I remained a silent spectator of a scene in which I had no inclination to take a part. The Baillie soon made rejoinder, though apparently somewhat awed by the deep and vehement excitement his intelligence had raised in the old gentleman.

“Hoot, Mr Spreull, ye shouldnae tak on sae, although ye are maybe in for a thousand or twa; ye ken sic things maun happen in trade, and are just to be tholed by us a’. Your losses at yae time, ye ken, are made up for by your profits at anither; an’ weel I wat sic a loss might have fa’en on them that’s less able to bear it than yoursel, had it been a thousand for every hundred.”

“For losses in the fair way of business,” replied the other, “I lay my account wi’ them

like ither folk, and can bear them as weel as my neighbours ; but to be cheated, robbed, and swindled by a fair-faced and dishonest scoundrel, is what I am called upon to bear neither by British law nor Christian morality ; and baith Mr Penny and Mr Trotter will maybe find, to their cost, they could not have selected a worse subject for siccan an imposition, than David Spreull."

" Lord bless us !" rejoined the Baillie, who did not appear more than myself to comprehend the gist of my uncle's accusations, " I'm sorry to hear ye talk in that dour and bitter way, aboot the poor folk. What waur are ye aff in the present business than fifty mair, less able to bear their losses than yoursel ? Penny and Trotter hae stoppit payment, and ye're a creditor o' the concern, which, if a' that's said be true, is no likely to make much return. There's naething extraordinar in a' this, though a body would think, frae the violent and flytin' way ye speak o' them, they had clappit a pistol to your breast and robbit you on the highway."

" Clappit pistol to my breast and robbit me, say ye ?" vehemently rejoined my uncle—" to

do that requires spirit and courage, and these puir miserable deevils have none. Wad ye even chieils like thae, wha come to swindle you wi' a smooth tongue and a girnin gab, to a fair and open robber who demands yer siller on the King's highway? *He* comes at least in his real character of an open enemy, and perils baith life and soul for the miserable pittance he gains by his unprofitable trade. Such a man I neither hate nor despise; and whatever means I may think myself bound to take for the recovery or preservation of my property, he has my best wishes to escape from the gallows in this world, and the deevil's claut in the next."

"Weel, weel," exclaimed the Baillie, perceiving all contention on this matter to be hopeless, and willing, at least, to know the simple facts of the case, "it's weel ken't, Mr Spreull, that there's no a langer head in the toon o' Glasgow than yer ain; and trying to cheat you, is like suppin' kail wi' the deil, it needs a lang spoon no to come aff second best. But you forget that neither Mr Thornton nor I, ken ony of the particulars of the case."

Upon these, at last, Mr Spreull condescended

to enter, and it soon appeared that the head and front of the offending of Messrs Penny and Trotter, consisted in incurring a debt of three thousand pounds to the old gentleman only a few days before, when it was scarcely possible to suppose them ignorant of their impending insolvency. This, to say truth, was provoking enough, but perhaps would not so vehemently have excited the old gentleman's passions, had the deception not involved, besides pecuniary loss, an imputation on his sagacity, and exposed him to the mortification of having it known to the world that he had been duped. To a man of his substance, indeed, the loss did not carry with it any serious inconvenience, and it is but justice to state, what I afterwards learned, that in this case, according to the old Scottish saying, "his bark was waur than his bite," and that his better feelings did not suffer him to carry his threatened vengeance into effect.

Instruments so ill in tune as my uncle, the Baillie, and myself, could not be expected to produce a very harmonious concert, and the excellent Glenlivet of the Regency wasted its powers in vain. At length the party broke up,

and having wished the Baillie good night, I accompanied the old gentleman home, in order to see him once more installed in his domicile. All the way he spoke not a word, and we were ascending the stair, when Girzy, now on the alert, appeared on the landing-place, bearing a candle to light our steps. Aware of the advantage of offensive operations in a case like the present, she determined to carry war into the camp of the enemy, and lost no time in coming to the scratch.

“Weel, I’m glad to see you hame again, baith o’ ye,” said she, as we advanced, “though yin wad hae expeckit better things frae a man o’ your years, than to be takin’ folk by surprise at this gate. Couldna ye hae just drappit me a line to let me ken ye war comin’ the night, and I might hae had a gude comfortable supper ready for you and Mr Ceeral? But this is no the first time ye hae sair’t me sae, and I maun e’en say it’s really a daft-like proceeding.”

This fire of Girzy’s stern chaser was answered, as might be expected, by a whole broadside from her enraged antagonist, who, taking advantage of his heavier metal, poured in both shot

and shell with such destructive energy, that the Girzy bomb lay at length a mere log upon the water, much damaged both in hull and rigging, yet disdaining to strike her colours. In the course of the engagement, however, the facts of the case were elicited, which were briefly these.

Girzy's talents as a "howdie" were held in much estimation by a large circle of matronly acquaintance, and as we are naturally partial to that pursuit in which we excel, Girzy by no means shunned any opportunity that offered for the display of her obstetrical talents. In the present instance she had been induced to desert her post, by a pressing message from the wife of Deacon Dinwiddie, stating that she had just been "ta'en wi' her thraws," requesting a visit from her friend, and expressing much apprehension that she was destined to "hae a sair time o't." Girzy could not resist this golden opportunity for the exercise of her skill, and seized it with all the avidity of a dilettante practitioner. She had not gone forth, however, on the exercise of her high vocation, without issuing special injunctions to Jenny to remain a

close tenant of the house during her absence, and desiring that she might receive the earliest information in case her master should arrive in the interval. No sooner, however, was Girzy's back turned, than Jenny sallied forth to hear the "clash o' the toon," from her companions at the West-port Well. Such were the causes of this domestic uproar, which threatened to involve consequences of the most serious nature to the whole of Mr Spreull's establishment.

"An' what business hae ye to be concerned in any such matters? are there no doctors eneugh in the town, without your setting up for a howdie? think ye it's a guid reason to gie a man, when he's just come aff a journey baith cauld and hungry, and finds his ain door steekit in his face, that he maun cool his cuits on the stair-head, because Mrs Dinwiddie's ta'en wi' her thraws?—the deevil thraw baith you and her! But it's just as weel that ye should understand yae thing, that my housekeeper's no to be trotting after every kittling wife in the parish, and gin ye canna mak up your mind to mind your ain business, and leave the care of cleekin' wives to ither folk, ye had better just pack up

your duds and seek a place that will suit you better, for here ye shall not stay, ye may just tak that in your lug."

At this, as it appeared to Girzy, unprovoked and gratuitous threat, she waxed wroth.

"Na, Mr Spreull," exclaimed the indignant matron, "gin ye want to part wi' an auld,—ay, and though I say it that shouldna say't, a gude servant, ye hae just to say the word, and I'se warrant ye shall soon hae a toom house o' me. Just speak, and in hauf an hour's time, I promise you I'se darken yer doors nae mair; and gin this is a' that's come o' twenty years hard and faithfu' service,—for takin' tent o' ye baith day and night—in health and sickness,—for guidin', and managin', and scrimpin' a' things to save yer substance,—if this be a' the thanks I'm to get for a' my service, I here tak Maister Ceeral to witness, that I'm ready to shake the dust frae aff my feet at yer door, and rather die in the aulmshoose than eat the bread, even for anither day, o' sae doure, cauld-hearted, and thankless a maister."

"What for do ye gang on like a gomeril at this gait?" rejoined her master, not a little

taken aback by this unexpected effervescence of female spirit ; “ wha wants ye to gang gin ye like to stay——”

“ What for do I gang on, ask ye,” interrupted Girzy, determined to keep her vantage ground, “ what for do I gang on at this gait ?—rather tell me what for is a’ this stramash ?—What for do you come hame like a fury, wi’ yer een on a low, and a voice louder than Bell Geordy’s, and tell an auld servant to gang her gait, because she happened to be no just in the hoose when ye arrived at an unexpected and untimeous hour frae the country ? Oh, Mr Spreull, but ye’re a doure and a hard man, and that a’ the warld says o’ ye. But fare ye weel ; for a’ that’s come and gane,” here she softened her voice, “ I wadna part wi’ ye in ill bluid ; there, tak the keys,” producing, at the same time, a large bunch, and extending her hand with them towards her master, “ there, tak the keys, ye’ll find a’ things right ; and fare ye weel, for beneath your roof-tree I shall na sleep anither night.”

Whether Girzy really intended to take her departure, or whether this was merely a rheto-

rical artifice, is beyond my fathom to determine. But the very idea of such an event, so utterly unlooked for, was evidently not a little appalling to my uncle. If artifice it was in Girzy, never was artifice better supported by external demonstrations of truth. She had assumed, in the course of her speech, a stately port and demeanour, to her unwonted. A look of high resolve sat throned on her brow, as she stretched forth her hand with the keys to her astonished master.

“ What, in God’s name, Girzy, mak’s ye speak such haevers as ye’ve been bletherin’ for the last five minutes, and what for do ye keep raxin’ the keys, as if I wanted them frae ye? Gie us nae mair o’ your clishmaclavers, but gang ben the house, and gin ye dinna think better o’t in the morning, I’s warrant you’ll find nae objections on my part to your seeking for another place.”

Perceiving, now, that the contest was likely to terminate without any important results, and observing both parties to manifest an inclination for peace, on the footing of the *status*

ante bellum, I took an early opportunity of withdrawing from the field, and returned to my quarters in the College.

CHAPTER XIV.

Farewell ! a word that hath been, and must be.

BYRON.

Now lords and earls, and all their sweeping train,
And garters, stars, and coronets appear.

POPE.

IN youth, with all its gaiety and excitements, “time passes o’er us with a noiseless lapse;” and his course is swift and trackless as that of a bird. Spring was now gone, and it was summer. The halls of the College were once more deserted, and I, too, made preparation for departure.

The first of May is the day fixed by immemorial usage in the University, for the distribution of the prizes : a day looked forward to with “hopes, and fears that kindle hope,” by many youthful and ardent spirits. The great hall of the College on that day certainly pre-

sents a very pleasing and animated spectacle. The academical distinctions are bestowed with much of ceremonial pomp, in presence of a vast concourse of spectators, and it is not uninteresting to mark the flush of bashful triumph on the cheek of the victor,—the sparkling of his downcast eye, as the hall is rent with loud applause, when he advances to receive the badge of honour assigned him by the voice of his fellow-students. It is altogether a sight to stir the spirit in the youthful bosom, and stimulate into healthy action faculties which, but for such excitement, might have continued in unbroken slumber. Of such distinctions, irregular as my habits of study had been, I was a partaker. In some of my classes I stood first,—in all I carried off some mark of successful application; and, in now looking back on the year which I spent in the College of Glasgow, I cannot but refer to it, the acquisition of that love of literature, which has never died within me, and in which I have found a relief and a resource, under circumstances when its place could not have been otherwise supplied.

Of my family I have of late said little, yet

they were but seldom absent from my thoughts, and with the different members of it I kept up a constant intercourse by letter. My father seldom wrote to me, and when he did, his letters betrayed little of that affectionate feeling which might be expected to breathe in the confidential intercourse of a parent, and an only son. His letters were indeed neither harsh nor unkind, but they were cold and stately, and in character those of a monitor rigid in the performance of a duty, more than of a father, whose hopes were garnered up in the object he addressed. From my mother I heard more frequently, but writing was an exertion to which she was frequently unequal, and my principal correspondent was Jane. In the letters of that dear sister, nothing that interested me, was too insignificant to find a place. She gathered information from the grooms and keeper of my stud and kennel, which she faithfully embodied (bating a few technical mistakes,) in her epistles. She told me of Hecuba, my favourite old mare, and enlarged on the colour and beauty of her foal, which little Lucy fed daily in the paddock. She spoke, too, of Don and Ponto,—of Ariel, my

little spaniel, petted and caressed by all, for the sake of her absent master. The accounts which I received from Jane of my mother's health, though unfavourable, did not excite in me any alarm. Nor did either Jane or my father appear to feel such. She had, I was told, become more feeble, but a trip to Brighton was meditated, and the sea-breezes would restore her strength. She suffered from a severe cough; but this the warmth of the approaching summer would remove. Her spirits, too, were good, and her letters betrayed no symptom of the languor of disease. It is not the character of youth to anticipate evil. Death is then regarded as a distant, though inevitable event, to whose dreaded approach we shut our eyes and stop our ears, till his chariot-wheels are at hand, and he already thunders at the gate.

In this situation did matters stand, when, at the conclusion of the College session, I wrote to my father to learn his wishes as to my motions. My friend Conyers was about to visit one of his guardians in Yorkshire, an old fox-hunting squire, where he was to remain till a cornetcy of dragoons had been ob-

tained for him. We proposed a tour by the Lakes, and he pressed me to accompany him on his visit, before returning to my own family. I mentioned this scheme to my father, and requested his consent. He gave it, but desired that I would take advantage of my being in Yorkshire to offer a visit to our relation the Earl of Amersham, with whom, from the seclusion in which my father had spent the latter years of his life, little intercourse, during my remembrance, had been maintained. To the advantages which might arise from keeping up this connexion, he was not insensible. The Earl was ministerial in his politics, and had a borough or two at command; and therefore he was, at least, a person worth courting, by a young man just about to enter the world, with fewer friends and smaller fortune than was desirable. My mother wrote accordingly to the Countess, with whom she had at one period of her life been intimate, informing her that she could not hear of my being in Yorkshire without feeling anxious that I should become personally known to relations, for whom both she and my father entertained so perfect a regard.

Preliminaries being at length settled for our departure, Conyers and myself set forth on our excursion, with light and joyous hearts. My parting with my uncle was to me an affecting one. Before I rose to say farewell, at our last interview, we had been conversing for about an hour. I had laid before him with perfect openness and sincerity my hopes and prospects, for I then regarded him only as a warm and faithful friend. He could scarcely be expected to approve of my partiality for a military life, but he had knowledge enough of character to perceive that my inclinations were not to be controlled on this matter, and he did not seriously attempt it.

“Weel, Cyril,” said he, “since ye will be a sodger, and are fool enough to gang to be shot at for twa or three shillings a day, when ye might stay at hame and do far better, it’s needless for me to try and reason you out o’ what I see ye’ve set your heart on. But gang where ye like, ye’ll hae the prayers o’ an auld man for the blessings o’ Providence on your head. May God’s mercy be a fence and a buckler to you in the day of battle, and his grace ever guide you

and protect you in the perilous course of life on which you are about to enter."

Here the old man was silent, the expression of his face was stern and unmoved as ever, but my own heart sympathetically told me of all that was working in his. Tears gushed from my eyes as I rose to bid him adieu. I endeavoured,—but I could not speak. He grasped my hand in his, with a strong and yet somewhat tremulous pressure. For a minute there was silence, but the old man became gradually calmer, and thus spoke:—"Farewell, Cyril, farewell; it's like that on this side o' the grave we may never meet again. Yet I may live to hear o' your well-doing, and that will be to me the best and maist joyfu' tidings I can hear in this world. Gang,—but mind while I live, gin ye want a friend to help you in time of need, ye hae yin in your auld uncle that will no forsake you in your trouble. Gang,—and an auld man's blessing be on your head, and his prayers shall follow for your happiness and prosperity, wherever it may please God that your lot may be cast." As he spoke, he laid his hand solemnly on my head, then embracing me,

he turned suddenly from me. I rushed, much moved, from the apartment, and in a moment found myself—in the arms of Girzy. Before I succeeded in extricating myself from this unpleasant predicament, I had undergone the penalty of several kind kisses, while I felt her arms clasping my neck with such a gripe, as that with which a vulture seizes a lamb. “Just promise to come back again,” said the worthy creature with red eyes and in a choking voice—“Just promise to come back and see us again, and I’ll let you gang.”

“Yes, yes,” I answered, anxious to escape, and quite overcome by this unexpected prolongation of the scene—“Yes, and may God bless you;” and by a sudden effort I released myself from her grasp, and effected my escape.

No cure for mental depression is so efficacious as travelling. My heart was heavy when, seated in the Carlisle mail *vis à vis* to my friend Conyers, we whirled rapidly through the Gallowgate, and bade a long, probably an eternal farewell to Glasgow. With reverted eyes I gazed upon the lofty towers of the Cathedral, till, by the increasing distance, they could no longer be

distinctly traced in the dense canopy of smoke which overhung the city. My attention, however, was soon engrossed by the new objects which were constantly presenting themselves as we advanced, and long before we reached Hamilton, "my bosom's lord sat lightly on its throne," and my spirits were light and buoyant as the air I breathed.

Never did I pass a more delightful week than that which we spent in the neighbourhood of the lakes, in exploring their transcendent scenery. Amidst such objects, and at such an age, was it possible for beings, with hearts young and unoppressed by the cares of the world, to be otherwise than happy? We required no artificial stimulus,—no extraneous excitement, to goad on our fancy to enjoyment. "The common air, the earth, the skies," were in themselves all sufficient. They gave us *then*, what millions, did I possess them, could not purchase *now*. In youth happiness is cheap, but the enjoyments of a jaded spirit must be dearly bought, and when bought, are vapid.

On quitting the lakes, a day's journey brought us to the house of Squire Parkyns, who recei-

ved both his ward and myself with a hearty welcome. He was a gentleman of a good estate and a justice of the quorum, a warm-hearted and well-meaning man, and marked by that devotion to field-sports, "which is the badge of all his tribe," but I should imagine one of the most unfit persons in the world to be entrusted with the guardianship of a young man. His wife, Conyers told me, had been dead many years, and he had lost an only son, whose skull had been fractured by a fall from his horse, when out hunting. The old man's spirits had long succumbed under this latter blow, but they had again recovered, and, notwithstanding he had three daughters married in the neighbourhood, he preferred keeping what he called "bachelor's hall," to again submitting his establishment to female management and control. To a jovial old spirit like this, the society of Conyers and myself was not unpleasing. We admired and praised his stud, listened to his sporting anecdotes, and in all disputes about hunting or shooting, deferentially chose him as our umpire. In three days we drank him into a fit of the gout, and in three more, I received

a letter from Lord Amersham, expressing in courtly phrase his thanks for the proposed visit, and the delight which both he and Lady Amersham would feel in receiving at Staunton Court the son of his old and valued friend.

After receiving this communication, I spent a week in the society of Conyers and the old Squire, before I could bring myself to think of taking my departure. Even then I was induced more than once to uncord and unpack my trunks, when all prepared for a start, and to add another day to the duration of my sojourn. With regard to Conyers, our characters amalgamated wonderfully, and a strong mutual regard had grown up between us. Of all the men I have ever known, Conyers, I think, possessed in the greatest degree the power of conciliating attachment. He was indeed a fine and generous creature, and the gaiety of his spirit, the openness of his disposition, and his entire recklessness of self, were enough to disarm the censure of the most rigid moralist on his failings.

At length we parted, but there was no tinge of melancholy in our adieu—we embraced, vow-

ed friendship, and bade farewell, with all the warmth and sincerity, yet with all the light-heartedness, of youth. We were about to enter on the same profession, to encounter the same dangers, to mingle in the same world. We were to meet frequently, and were destined to pass many happy days in each other's society—we were but to enjoy the pleasures, to pluck the rose of life ; and as for its thorns,—we thought not—knew not of them.

And so we parted.—The Gazette shortly after informed me that Charles was appointed to a cornetcy of dragoons in a regiment then stationed in Ireland. Soon after joining, he wrote me in ecstasies of his new profession, entreating me to procure, if possible, a commission, then vacant in the regiment. But it was yet dubious whether my father would consent to my becoming a soldier. In any case it was very certain, that my preference for a particular regiment would be treated by him as a mere boyish whim, and disregarded as such. Under present circumstances, therefore, I felt and knew the obstacles to the accomplishment of my wishes to be insurmountable. Years of sepa-

ration elapsed. Our correspondence, regular at first, became gradually less frequent, as the pleasures and business of the world thickened around us, and more deeply engrossed our thoughts; and long before we again met, it had been altogether discontinued.

On parting from my friend and the old Squire, I had thirty miles to travel before reaching Staunton Court, the seat of my noble relatives. Hitherto I had mixed but little in society, and that little only in the character of a boy. The dignity of a grown man—a gentleman—which I had known only by anticipation, I was now for the first time to enjoy; and it was not without a sense of novel dignity, that I felt myself about to take part in a scene, which, even to my own imagination, seemed worthy of the actor. Still it was with some palpitations of the heart, —some more than wonted misgivings of my own power of pleasing, that I beheld the gates of the lodge thrown open at my approach, and thought, as the carriage wound along the stately and serpentine approach, that the wished-for moment was at hand.

The park was extensive, and stocked with the

finest timber. Large herds of deer were cropping the pastures, or reclining in the shade. Everything around gave indication of magnificent antiquity,—of a residence which in my imagination well befitted one whose ancestors had bled in the Crusades—a descendant of those noble barons who gained, at their sword's point, the great and enduring charter of their country's freedom. The hand of wealth indeed was everywhere visible, but with none of that tinsel ornament and gewgaw profusion, which marks the splendour of a *nouveau riche*.

An approach of three miles brought us at length in sight of the house. It was a large and massive pile of building, of a quadrangular form, and showing, in its style of architecture, that picturesque peculiarity, by which the works of Inigo Jones, our English Palladio, are so generally distinguished. The house had originally been surrounded by a moat, but that was now dry, and planted with flowers and shrubs of singular beauty and luxuriance. Across this was thrown a bridge of light and graceful construction, terminated by an arch, over which the arms of the family, surmounted by an earl's

coronet, were cut in high relief, and supported on either flank by a ferocious dragon, displaying all the exuberance of tail and tusk with which heralds usually rejoice to adorn their fabulous creations. Beneath, the motto, "*A gladio et per gladium*," was emblazoned in golden characters, and harmonized well with my own ideas of the chivalrous dignity of baronial tenure.

On descending from the carriage, I entered a circular hall of spacious dimensions, the roof of which ascended to the full height of the building, and was lighted by a cupola in the centre. The walls were wainscoted and hung with pictures, and on a pedestal in the centre stood a statue of Charles the Second, who, in the days of his adversity, had found both welcome and safety within the walls of Staunton. I was ushered across this magnificent apartment through a troop of liveried menials, and, after ascending a short marble staircase, adorned and perfumed by a double row of beautiful exotics, entered the library, which I found untenanted. The groom of the chambers then informed me that neither Lord nor Lady Amersham were at home, and requested to know

whether I chose any refreshment after my journey. To this I answered in the negative, and the attendant, making a polite bow, quitted the apartment. Thus left alone, and perhaps a little daunted by the pomp and ceremony by which the scene around me was invested, I seated myself in an easy chair, and once more gave the reins to my fancy.

I pictured to myself the owner of this splendid demesne. "Undoubtedly," I said, "he is a person of lofty carriage and finished elegance of manner; proud, for how can he be otherwise?—but his is a generous pride, ever veiled in courtesy to his equals, and kindness to his inferiors. Raised by his wealth and station above the petty cares and anxieties by which meaner men are agitated, he is liberal, nay, munificent in his ideas, with a hand open as day to melting charity. He is a hero,—for the blood of the noblest chivalry of England flows in his veins. He is a patriot,—for he cannot forget the country to which he owes so much. He is loyal,—for his station marks him out as a hereditary bulwark of the throne."

In this manner did my imagination run on,

adding new colours to the picture it had drawn, till the owner of the mansion seemed to stand before me, invested with every possible grace and excellence.

“And I am now,” thought I, “to appear in the presence of this noble and transcendent personage. With what an air of deference and respect must I address him, and what impression can I, a raw, ignorant, and untutored boy, expect to make on one whose taste and talents must, at a glance, lay bare to him the whole extent of my deficiencies? I shall at least do my best,” resolved I, and, rising from my chair, advanced towards a pier glass, in front of which I began to practise such bows and deferential modes of address, as appeared to me best suited to so formidable an introduction. In order to derive all possible benefit from this preparatory rehearsal, I judged it right to suit the word to the action, addressing myself first in the character of Lord Amersham, and then framing a fitting answer in my own.

“Mr Thornton,” said I, as his lordship’s mouth-piece, assuming at the same time an air of graceful dignity, mingled with much kind-

ness and condescension, "I am delighted to have the honour of welcoming you for the first time to Staunton Court. Believe me, I sincerely rejoice in this opportunity of cultivating an acquaintance which circumstances have long, too long, delayed.—Lady Amersham, let me present to you our relation, Mr Cyril Thornton. Lady Melicent, I beg to introduce your cousin."

"My lord," replied I, in my own character, making, as I spoke, a profound obeisance, "do me the honour, I pray your lordship, to accept my very sincere thanks for your kindness and condescension. To Lady Amersham and my fair cousin I——"

Here I was interrupted by a half-suppressed titter in the apartment, a sound at that moment more dreadful to my ear than would have been that of the explosion of a mine beneath my feet, or the hissing of a Boa Constrictor beneath the drawing-room table. I stood for an instant as if transfixed, my head bent forward in the act of addressing my noble host, and my right hand extended to receive the friendly pressure of his palm. At length, assuming the courage of despair, I determined to know the worst at once.

I raised my head, and, looking round, beheld two young ladies, who had evidently been witnesses of my absurd exhibition. Fancy a youth of acute, nay, almost morbid sensibility, placed in such a situation, and it is possible, barely possible, if you are a person of strong imagination, that you may form some inadequate idea of the spiritual torture I then suffered. If anything in this world can afford a good apology for suicide, it is undoubtedly such a detection as that of which I was the subject. Luckily neither pistol, razor, nor pen-knife presented themselves, nay, not a bodkin, or I verily believe that instant had terminated my mortal career. From the top of my head to the sole of my foot, I had a pulse throbbing like a sledgehammer in every inch. My eyes stared wildly round, in the hopeless effort to find some avenue of escape. I would have given my inheritance for a snug birth in the coal-cellar, or have paid down a handsome difference to have changed situations with Daniel in the lions' den. I would have caught at a cell in the Inquisition, or the dungeon of Baron Trenck, and have thought the penalty a light one, compared to the ago

nizing horror of such a detection. Never did Ghost, Gorgon, or Chimæra, appear so terrific to human eyes, as did the vision of these two elegant and blooming girls at that moment to mine.

They stood near the fire-place, shawled and bonnetted, as if just returned from a walk. One of them was curiously reconnoitring me with an eye-glass, and the other, with her handkerchief at her mouth, was evidently endeavouring to suppress a laugh, in which she was not wholly successful. What could I do? To prolong the ridicule of my situation, by continuing to stand before the mirror, was impossible; to advance or retire, equally dreadful. Which evil I at length preferred, whether I rushed on Scylla or Charybdis, my mind was in too great a state of confusion to enable me now to recollect.

“What a very odd person!” observed one of my fair tormentors, in a half whisper.

“Yes, a delightful original,” replied her companion; and, making a strong effort to resume her gravity, she advanced, and thus addressed me: “Since chance has thrown us together, there is, I think, no reason to wait for a formal

introduction. Some expressions of your soliloquy which we accidentally overheard, sufficiently betrayed that you are Mr Cyril Thornton, who has been, I know, an expected guest for some days. Mr Thornton, let me introduce you to Miss Pynsent—Miss Pynsent, Mr Thornton.”

In reply to this address, delivered with the most perfect self-possession, and an air of grace and high breeding, the union of which was remarkable in one evidently so young, I stammered out some inquiries for Lord and Lady Amersham, bowed, and, I suppose, looked like a blockhead. I am very sure I felt like one. The ice, however, was now broken ; and though, in a case like the present, it cannot exactly be said that “*ce ne que le premier pas qui coûte*,” it is certainly true that the *premier pas* is, out of sight, the most painful and difficult, and each succeeding one becomes comparatively easy. The young lady was lively and animated, and did not suffer the conversation to languish ; and I might have hoped that my folly had been either overlooked or forgotten, had I not observed that a look of laughing intelligence was occasionally interchanged between the fair companions.

“Come, Julia,” at length said the lady Mellicent, “our malapropos intrusion has already too long interrupted the rhetorical studies of Mr Thornton,” at the same time rising to depart; “we must get rid of these odious walking habiliments.—Mamma and Lady Pynsent are gone to call at Feversham Park,” continued she, addressing me, and looking at her watch. “It is now half-past four o’clock, and we do not dine till seven, so you still have two hours to practise oratory; but should you tire of that, and choose a turn in the park, you will probably meet papa at the farm, to which any one will direct you. *Au revoir*; pray do not forget to introduce into your speech, something peculiarly elegant about your *fair cousin*.” So saying, she linked her arm in that of her sister grace, and with the lightness of sylphs they glided out of the apartment.

She spoke with a wicked archness of look, and there was a laughing devil in her eye, by no means soothing to my irritated sensibilities, and when left alone, I for some time paced the apartment with long and irregular strides, reflecting, in no enviable mood, on the ridiculous

figure I must have cut before those very person in whose eyes I was most anxious to make a favourable impression. It may be imagined, I had no inclination to resume the exercise in which I had been so unseasonably interrupted. I determined, therefore, on a stroll in the park, and to effect my introduction to Lord Amersham, in case I should encounter him in my walk.

The air and exercise tended to calm my spirits, and somewhat to restore the self-composure, of which my unfortunate debut in the library had so utterly deprived me. There is something in the very aspect of nature—in its simplest sounds and commonest features—soothing and delightful. They seem as if intended to act as an oblivious antidote to those mental perturbations which are generated by the cares and anxieties of artificial life. For such wounds, nature has provided a simple medicament, which the united experience of mankind proves to be efficacious. The citizen retires to his box at Hackney or on Champion-hill, and the lawyer “babbles of green fields,” at his villa in Kent or Hertfordshire. They are conscious of the

effect, though perhaps ignorant of the cause. They feel that the thousand tight-drawn ligaments which bind them to the world are for the moment loosened,—the shackles fall from their limbs, and they draw from the bosom of nature that simple nourishment, which strengthens and braces them again to undergo the repetition of their daily toils.

Of this restorative power, I felt in my ramble the full medicinal efficacy. The park was fine and extensive. The venerable oaks cast their shadows broader as the sun sunk in the horizon, on the greensward beneath them and around. The birds were carolling their vespers, and the deer that stood on a neighbouring eminence tossing high their branchy foreheads, showed like creatures embedded in the purple glory of the sky.

Occupied with the scene around me, I had forgotten my purpose of seeking Lord Amersham, till warned of the necessity of returning to the house, by the sound of the first dinner-bell. I had turned for that purpose, and was leisurely retracing my steps to the mansion, when I observed a person of rather *outré* ap-

pearance approaching hastily in a diagonal direction, evidently with the wish to overtake me. I accordingly waited for his approach, and as he advanced, had time to take a pretty accurate observation of his person.

He was dressed in a jacket of bottle-green, garnished with buttons of mother-of-pearl, of dimensions unusually large. His nether integuments were of dark plush, and over his legs, which were exceedingly clumsy and unshapely, he wore gaiters, the under part of which was of cloth, and the upper of dingy-coloured leather. His beaver was of a drab-colour, distinguished by an unusual latitude of brim, and bearing evident marks of long exposure to the vicissitudes which mark our climate. In his hand he carried a long pole, terminating at its lower extremity in a weeding-hook. His figure was round and squab, of ungainly proportions, and marked, when in motion, by a singular jerking of the body and limbs, producing altogether rather a ludicrous effect. His face and head were large. The former slightly pitted by the small-pox, and

displaying features coarse and apparently unsuited to each other, constituting just such a countenance as one might be supposed to form, were he to select a feature from each of his ugly acquaintances, and huddle them altogether into one visage. Judging from the tout ensemble, he might be park-keeper or farmer; one probably well to do in the world, and in his obesity furnishing at once a practical illustration and comment, on the “scope and tendency of Bacon.”

Curious to know what such a person could want with me, and taking compassion on the exertions which his pursuit evidently cost him, I stopped my walk, which at first I had only slackened, till he came up. For some seconds he was unable to speak, and stood panting for breath to enable him to commence his address.

“Mr Cyril Thornton, I presume?” said this grotesque personage. I bowed in acquiescence, and without pausing, he proceeded. “Beg ten thousand pardons, that you should have been left so long alone.—Delighted to see you at Staunton.—Saw your carriage pass, and guess-

ed it was you, but was so busy with Sam Brown, (my farm bailiff,) that I could not escape a moment to welcome you. We farmers, Mr Thornton, as you will probably know by and by, are literally *adscripti glebæ* ; we must follow the plough, and trust to the good-nature of our friends to forgive omissions. You must come to-morrow, and see my farm ; I'll show you stock worth the seeing. But let us move on now, for the dinner-bell has rung, and we have no time to stand chattering."

This voluble address was so rapidly enunciated, that I found it impossible to hitch in any thing in reply ; and as we proceeded towards the house, the Earl, for he it was, still continued to talk.

" Hope you left your family quite well ?—Your mother is a charming woman,—first saw her at a ball at Bath, two, three, four, five and twenty years ago,—turned the heads of all the young men in those days. Your father, too, a most worthy and excellent person, and my particular friend. But oh ! I forget, you're not from Thornhill ; I think I heard you were at school, at—at—at—Manchester ?"

“ At the College of Glasgow, my Lord,” interrupted I, rather piqued at the mistake, and unwilling to be mistaken for a Manchester school-boy.

“ Oh, ah, Glasgow was it?—my memory is so bad, and I am apt to make a sad jumble when talking of those—as Mr Pitt called them, ‘ great emporiums of commerce,’—Leeds, Sheffield, Glasgow, Manchester.—I knew you were at one or another of them, though not exactly certain which. Glasgow, eh? Then you’re from Scotland, and must tell me all about the Scotch farming,—the succession of crops, and all that.—Scotch black-faced sheep too, capital mutton, but devils for leaping fences,—not so good on the huggins as Leicestershire, and coarse in the fleece. Notwithstanding all you’ve seen in Scotland, flatter myself you’ll like our farming in Yorkshire. To-morrow morning you must come to the farm and see my new patent threshing-machine—nine-horse power, and managed by a boy.”

We now reached the house, and the necessity of speedy preparations for dinner, occasioned an abrupt termination to be put to the conver-

sation. I retired, accordingly, for this purpose, and when engaged in the operations of the toilet, could scarce refrain from smiling, when I remembered how ludicrously all my anticipations of the person, manners, and character of Lord Amersham had been at variance with the fact.

CHAPTER XV.

If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch ?
King John.

LORD AMERSHAM, to whom in the latter part of the last chapter I have introduced my readers, had been bred a soldier. Possessing rank, fortune, title, high connexions, and parliamentary influence, his rise in his profession had been impeded by none of those obstacles which men in ordinary circumstances always find it difficult, often impossible, to surmount. He rose rapidly to be a General, and without encountering either the hazards of the field, or the vicissitudes of climate, obtained his full share of the solid pudding, as well as of the empty honours of his profession—a regiment of dragoons, and the insignia of the Bath.

Of such a distribution of rewards in a society

constituted as ours, it were vain and perhaps impolitic to complain. Of late years, perhaps, the military profession, of all others, is the one in which distinguished merit can with least justice complain of being treated with neglect; and while this is so—while the system is admitted on all hands to work practically well, we may safely permit a few of its honours to be diverted,—if you will have it so,—from their natural and legitimate channel, into another, which, if it does not equally enrich and fertilize the soil, at least adds something to the general tone and splendour of the landscape.

There was certainly nothing in Lord Amersham's character to indicate any intention of nature to mould him into a great military commander. He was a person, nevertheless, of very tolerable talents, and by no means deficient in any of the ordinary acquirements befitting his rank. Unfortunately he was of a disposition insatiably restless and bustling, and made a point of never suffering his faculties to subside into a state of quiescence. With less of real business than falls to the share of any ordinary mortal, he contrived to spend his life in a flurry.

His mind was always on the tread-mill, continually working, but seldom with any visible result ; or, to use a better-sounding simile, Lord Amersham was a planet revolving eternally in the same orbit, and presenting itself to the gaze of the astronomer in a very limited variety of phases. His lordship, in short, was generally something of a bore, and when talking of his favourite pursuits, was apt to be rather too prolix in his reasonings, and minute in his enumeration of details, and when once fairly set a-going on his favourite hobby, would gallop on for a couple of hours on end, to the great enjoyment of himself, and the equal annoyance of his company. There was something indeed almost ludicrous in the strong contrast which existed between his mind and body—the one ever bustling and active, the other heavy and inert ; and it seemed to an observer passing strange, that so small a spirit should be able to stimulate into almost constant action a mass of matter so large and unwieldy. In the absence of other more important avocations, Lord Amersham had betaken himself to farming, and by applying all his ingenuity to its practical details, had suc-

ceeded, I believe, in discovering and carrying into practice several agricultural improvements.

There was but one misfortune in the life of Lord Amersham, which had occasioned him any deep and permanent regret—the want of a male successor to his hereditary honours and estates. It is true, there was nothing in the tenure by which these were held, to prevent their descending to his daughter ; but it was galling to reflect, that the far-descended line of which he was the head, would cease in his person to boast a male representative, and that the titles and wide demesnes which had been attached to it for centuries, would probably, by devolving on a female, become the appanage of some other and perhaps less noble family. The anticipation of such an event was not unaccompanied by pain, and had long been felt as a serious deduction from their happiness, both by Lord and Lady Amersham. To the latter it is now time the reader should be introduced.

In her youth Lady Amersham had been a beautiful woman, and was still a fine one. She was tall and of a stately person, bearing herself with a demeanour dignified and im-

sing. The expression of her countenance was perhaps too deficient in softness to be pleasing, and there was a coldness almost approaching to hauteur in her manner, especially in mixed company, which showed her fully aware of her own claims in society, and rigid in exacting a due observance of them in others. Where Lady Amersham, however, had any object to gain, or where she wished to make a favourable impression, no one possessed in a greater degree the power of doing so. No one could unbend more gracefully, and cast aside for a season that air of distance and repulsive dignity, by which all nearer approach was precluded from those whose claims to such a distinction were at all apocryphal. Bred in the precincts of a court, and accustomed through life to move in the very highest circles of ton, she was an able and experienced tactician in all the underhand manœuvres and expedients which are necessary to preserve the effulgence of even the brightest star in the hemisphere of fashion, from occasional obscurity. Over Lord Amersham she exercised an influence greater than he was perhaps aware of. Her power however was rather

felt than seen ; and while she threw no obstacle in the way of his indulgence in his favourite bucolical pursuits, she succeeded in bending his inclinations to her own, by securing his consent to a house in Grosvenor-square, and at least four months per annum of a town life. That there were amiable traits in Lady Amersham, I have reason to know ; and though feared and disliked by her rivals in the great world, there was in her character a certain splendid munificence, and generous kindness of heart, which made her beloved by her inferiors.

The pride and ambition of both parents naturally centered in their only daughter ; and in truth she was a creature in whom parental partiality required little apology for feeling pride. Lady Melicent de Vere was then about sixteen years of age, and rising into the pride of womanhood. Her figure was rather below than above the common height, but moulded in a symmetry which might have afforded a model for the sculptor. Her features were neither Roman nor entirely Grecian, but belonged to a certain nondescript medium, which might almost, according to the fancy of the observer, be inclu-

ded in either. I know not whether, if examined by a rigid critic, her face might have been considered analytically beautiful; but nothing could exceed the brilliancy of her dark eyes, or the fascination of her smile; and her countenance was lit up with so much spirit and vivacity, as to render it doubtful whether features more classically regular, might not have somewhat injured the charm of its expression. Unaccustomed to restraint, and habituated from her infancy to be the object of admiration, she had acquired a self-confidence somewhat precocious, and moved in society with all the ease and grace "which marks security to please." Such was the Lady Melicent as she now rises to my memory, in recurring to the period of my visit to Staunton Court.

Having dispatched the duties of the toilet, as expeditiously as possible, I descended, and found a portion of the dinner-party already assembled in the drawing-room. Lady Amersham, though somewhat stately, was kind, made many obliging inquiries respecting my mother and sisters, and introduced me to the assembled circle. This consisted, *imprimis*, of Lord and Lady Pynsent,

people perfectly *comme il faut*, polite and personable, in short, just such people as one would *a priori* suppose to possess a tenement in St James's square, or expect to meet at a reputable dinner-party in Piccadilly or Park Lane. Along with these came Mr Horace Pynsent, their son, an ensign in the Guards, and their daughter Miss Pynsent, a very pretty and accomplished young lady, not unmarked by something of that paleness, and, if I may so write, that conventional manner and expression, which an early subjection to the restraints of a town life seldom fails to substitute for the natural vivacity of youthful spirits.

Next in order came Sir Cavendish Potts, Knight, Commissioner of the Victualling Office, Clerk of the Pipe, &c. &c. Sir Cavendish had begun the world as an inferior clerk in one of the public offices, with a salary somewhat less than a hundred a-year. By dint of constant assiduity, and vigilance in seizing every opportunity of making himself useful to his superiors by little extra-official services, he had gradually risen to the enjoyment of the lucrative and distinguished offices above mentioned. Sir Cavendish was now

become a person of some importance, but his exertions did not slacken with his elevation. The same qualities to which he owed his worldly advancement, likewise procured his admission to the coteries of the beau-monde. He was the favourite of all dowagers of quality, arranged the programme of all grand entertainments, and superintended the execution of the details; was assiduous in procuring rich partners for sedentary young ladies, and danced himself, when occasion required, with the plain ones; knew all that was said or done, in every house, in every fashionable street or square in the metropolis, and was, in short, a very encyclopedia of anecdote, an inexhaustible calendar of scandal and tittle-tattle.

Of course, therefore, he was a favourite with the ladies; as for their husbands, he had always a full budget of politics at their service. He visited the prime minister, and was hand in glove with his under secretary; had always news, of the authenticity of which there could be no doubt, though he was not at liberty to mention his authority; knew of every meeting of the cabinet, and the result of its deliberation

five minutes after it broke up. In the sporting world, his information was no less accurate and extensive. He could tell you off-hand the latest odds on the Derby, knew exactly the condition of all the horses, and would mention in a confidential whisper the name of the winner.

Such and so distinguished a person was Sir Cavendish Potts, who, at the season of the year when it was "impossible to live in town," annually diffused his visits among his noble friends in the country. In this catalogue raisonné, I think I have included all the members of the party.—No, there was a Miss Cumberbatch, a person who seemed to fill a sort of nondescript situation, and to hold a sort of nondescript rank, in the ménage. She could scarcely be called a friend, for neither Lady Amersham nor her daughter admitted her to the privileges which such a title would imply, while she was evidently treated with more consideration than would probably have been conceded to a person in the rank of a governess in such an establishment. With no distinct duties to perform, she seemed to hold her situation in the family, on the difficult and precarious tenure of being not

only generally useful, but generally agreeable. Miss Cumberbatch was an extraordinary adept in working lace, and unusually skilful in embroidery; possessed great taste in dress, and was quite unrivalled in the scientific adjustment of drapery; did the honours of the breakfast-table with due propriety, and was always ready, when called on, to supply music, and favour the company with a song. Such were part, and but a small part, of Miss Cumberbatch's qualifications. Add to these, she could fill a place on a sofa, and, on a look from Lady Amersham, be conveniently instrumental in breaking off a tête-à-tête, where Lady Melicent was engaged in one, with a person whom the prudent mother did not think sufficiently entitled to such an honour. With regard to Lord Amersham, she was an excellent listener, never yawned nor betrayed lassitude during the recital of the most tedious story, and had always a smile or an exclamation of wonder ready to introduce at the proper time and place. Miss Cumberbatch was therefore a decided favourite with his Lordship, who found in her an auditor

whose patience his utmost loquacity could not exhaust.

Lord Amersham had not yet descended to the drawing-room when I entered, and when he did so, I confess it was not without surprise that I witnessed the metamorphosis he had undergone since our rencontre in the park. I now beheld an elderly gentleman, not much indebted to nature certainly, but exceedingly *recherché* in his dress, and bearing about him the visible impress of distinction. He wore his hair highly powdered, and curled in a manner so complicated, as evidently to have required the skill of no ordinary friseur. His clothes were made to fit as tight as possible, apparently with the view of diminishing to the utmost the bulk of his figure. In his shoes, and at the knee of his inferior garments, (to use a delicate periphrasis,) which were white, he wore gold buckles, and his upper regions were adorned by the star and riband of the Bath, decorations to which, as they were considered indicative of military distinction, he was particularly partial. The dinner-bell had sounded some minutes before his Lordship appeared. He entered

with hasty steps, which shook the apartment at every foot-fall, and trotting up (for walking it certainly was not) to Lady Pynsent, he proceeded to hand her to the dining-room, uttering, with uncommon volubility, as he advanced, a profusion of apologies for having kept the company waiting so long. To these Lady Pynsent did not apparently pay much attention, for, turning towards her son, then engaged in conversation with Sir Cavendish, she thus addressed him :—

“Now, Horace, if Lady Melicent does you to-day the honour of accepting your arm, be less awkward than yesterday, and mind you don’t tear her flounce again by your carelessness. For such an offence you could scarcely expect even from her sweet temper a second forgiveness.”

This, of course, was a pretty intelligible hint to the young gentleman what part he was expected to take in the ceremonial, and he approached, with an air of unhesitating self-complacency, to offer his services. They were playfully rejected.

“No,” replied Lady Melicent ; “I must not have my sweet temper put again to so early a

proof. You may practise to-day with Miss Cumberbatch, and if she reports you to have shown yourself a tolerable proficient in the duties of a carpet-knight, I may perhaps once more put your skill to the test.—Mr Thornton, it is time we relations should become better acquainted, and I therefore appoint you my Chevalier for the day, hoping you will take warning by the fate of your predecessor, and demean yourself in your office with all manner of grace and propriety.”

Mr Pynsent, though evidently rather mortified, did not venture to disobey; Lady Melicent, laughing, took my arm, and we descended to the dining-room.

I sat beside her at dinner, and this fact may perhaps serve as an excuse for my inability to give any satisfactory detail of the entertainment. Let the reader take for granted, therefore, that it was a sumptuous one; that the courses appeared and vanished in due order of succession; that the routine of the table was conducted with as much ceremony and minuteness of observance as might have satisfied the most vulgar parvenu; and that not one of the party com-

promised his reputation by the enormity of calling for porter.

At first, I felt a little embarrassed by the vivacity of my fair neighbour. The events of the morning recurred rather unpleasantly to my recollection, and I was inclined to regard her with somewhat of those feelings which Faust entertained, rather unreasonably, towards the devil, after the conclusion of his bargain with that legitimate and infernal potentate.

When seated at table, therefore, I was silent, or, when absolutely called on to speak, my remarks were trite and common-place. "This is really very intolerable," at length said Lady Melicent, addressing me; "I chose you for my esquire to-day, because I really expected you to turn out the most amusing person in company, and here you have actually sat out the fish and soup without speaking a syllable, or at least only such syllables as could just have been as well spoken by my macaw. Now, this will never do. You must really get up something smart and entertaining another time, that is, in case," glancing at me at the same time a look of playful malice, "in case all your speech-

es, like those of this morning, require a previous rehearsal."

"Nay, on that point I must sue for mercy, though I fear it is impossible to expect it from one whose perceptions of the ludicrous are so strong as those of the Lady Melicent. Yet a generous warrior does not trample on a fallen foe."

"Do not trust too much to my generosity in a case like the present; the story is too good a one to be lost, and must positively be told some time or other. Your only chance of escape is to conciliate my compassion, and that can only be done by a full confession. Begin, then; I am ready to hear all you can allege in mitigation of punishment."

I felt great relief in having an opportunity thus afforded me of getting rid of at least some of the ridicule I had incurred, and proceeded to tell the story of my disaster, glozing and suppressing the stronger and more ridiculous features of the case, and joining in the laugh at those which I found it impossible for my ingenuity to overcome.

"Well, then, I spare you for the present,"

said Lady Melicent, "not for your own sake, but because there is nobody here to whom I should have any pleasure in telling the story. Lord Pynsent would hear it with polite gravity; her ladyship with an affected smile; Mr Pynsent would adjust his cravat, and call you an extraordinary person; but not one of them would listen to it *con amore*, or indulge in a hearty laugh at your expense. Sir Cavendish perhaps might, but then the anecdote would spread at once through all the world of fashion, and you would be a ruined man. Now, we are to have a large party next week for York races, and I believe I shall keep it in petto till then."

"Nay, that would be malice prepense, a refinement of cruelty, of which I think, nay, I am sure, Lady Melicent is incapable."

"Nay, you don't know that; but, at all events, remember I am not the sole depositary of the secret. Miss Pynsent is a witness as well as myself, and must likewise be wooed to silence; not a very easy task, I can tell you, for we women, though paragons in everything else, are not particularly remarkable for secrecy.

Now, I should be glad to know how you can expect to interest her in your favour?"

"Through the kind intercession of the Lady Melicent."

"So you would attempt to gain one woman by means of another? Do you think *this* a plan very likely to be successful?"

"Yes; I am sure I could not possibly select a fairer or a more eloquent advocate, and in your hands I willingly rest my cause."

"Well, I will try what can be said for you, for I really did feel compassion for you. Never did man look more desperately stupified than you, on discovering we had been witnesses of your soliloquy! Why, you would have made a capital study for Hamlet on the entrance of his father's ghost, your hair on end, "like quills upon the fretful porcupine;" your eyes half starting from their sockets, and fixed as if by the gaze of a basilisk; your mouth open, your limbs stiff as those of Niobe.—But, come, I see you are rather sore on the subject, and I won't laugh at you. Let us try something else. Have you brought no amusing details with you from Scotland? You really look like a person who possessed the

faculty of second sight; do afford us a small specimen of your talents in that line. Of course, you are familiar with ghosts, wraiths, and all beings of that description, and were apparelled in the plaid, bonnet, and other appendages of Scottish costume, delightfully uncomfortable and picturesque. Pray begin, therefore; for, in satisfying my curiosity, you will have a tolerably long task to perform, I assure you."

Stimulated by the piquant badinage of my charming cousin, which was perhaps somewhat aided in its operation by a glass or two of champagne, I ceased to be the mute and changeling I had hitherto appeared, and shone forth, if not with native brilliancy, at least with the reflected lustre of another and a brighter planet. I seemed to inhale excitement in the very air I breathed. There was a delightful exhilaration in the bare idea of being the sole object of attention to a creature so radiantly captivating, whose smiles would probably ere long become the object of contention to the highest and noblest of the land. My faculties enjoyed their full swing, and all the finer powers of intellect and fancy with which nature had endowed me,

awoke as from a slumber, and came at that moment to my aid. In short, if I did not succeed in making myself agreeable, it was because nature had denied me the means of being so; for unquestionably I made the effort under a combination of the most favourable circumstances. Our tête-à-tête had been too animated and too long to escape the notice of Lady Amer-sham, who at length thought it prudent to break the chain of our conversation, which appeared in her eyes somewhat too continuous and engrossing. It is true, my acquaintance with her daughter had been too recent, and I was altogether a person of too humble pretensions, to excite any apprehensions, at least any serious ones, in her ladyship. To her, I believe, it seemed as impossible that Lady Melicent should form a *liaison* with Cyril Thornton, a commoner, and heir to an estate of some two or three thousand a-year, as that she should elope with the butler, or establish a sentimental correspondence with the Irish Giant; but she systematically disapproved of anything approaching to a monopoly of her daughter's smiles, and "*divide et impera*" was the maxim by which

her policy was governed. Her ladyship took occasion, therefore, to address to me certain questions, which made it necessary that I should enter, in reply, into considerable details, and at the same time skilfully contrived to engage Lady Melicent in conversation with Mr Pynsent. Having thus succeeded in her object, I found myself, for the first time, at liberty to turn my attention to the general conversation of the table.

Distinguishable above all other voices was that of Sir Cavendish Potts, shrill in tone, and scattering *επεα πτερόεντα* on all manner of subjects, from a change in the Cabinet to the *faux pas* of an alderman's wife, and never missing an opportunity of insinuating a compliment to his noble host and hostess. Among his other qualities, Sir Cavendish was something of a gourmand, and distinguished for his goût in all matters of the table.

"Nothing can be more exquisite," said he, at the same time depositing his fork, "than this *fricandeau au sauce piquante*. Bertrand's dishes have certainly a peculiar character one never meets with anywhere else. When I was

at Grimsthorpe, about a month ago, Colonel Haviland, no very great judge, you know, praised his Grace's dinners as being quite superior to all others.—‘Why, no,’ said the Duke, ‘the dinners are but barely tolerable, and a very few things in them perhaps are really done well; but, Colonel, if you can only manage to get me Lord Amersham's cook, I may perhaps have some chance of meriting your compliment.’ I agreed with him, that, under no other circumstances could it be possible for his Grace's entertainments to rival those of your lordship.”

“Yes,” said Lord Amersham, “Bertrand is really very great in his line, though I think he sometimes carries the display of his powers a little too far. No such thing as a plain joint ever comes to table. The venison is generally stuck all over with cloves and pepper-corns; and I have given up all hope of ever tasting my own mutton, so thoroughly disguised is it by Bertrand's sauce and spiceries.”

“The skill of Bertrand,” said Lord Pynsent, “seems like the philosopher's stone,—it turns everything into gold.”

“ Ay, just so,” replied Lord Amersham ;
“ but then the baser metals are of use likewise,
and I wish Bertrand would not insist in applying the Rosicrucian process to my Southdown. By the by, I have got a new cross, with which I intend astonishing Mr Coke of Holkham when he comes next month. Such fleece and such mutton ! I wish my old friend, John Duke of Bedford, had been alive ; how delighted he would have been ! I remember when he was last at Staunton, a short time before he died, we walked together over my farm ; he was prodigiously taken with it, and said, ‘ Lord Amersham, you are undoubtedly the first farmer in England !’ But about my new sheep, they are a mixture of the Welsh, Leicestershire, and Southdown, with a dash of the Angola and Merino. Lord Pynsent, if you would like a Ram, there is one at your service ; it will improve your breed amazingly. Your lordship is almost the only person to whom I would have offered such a thing. I assure you, to nobody but your lordship——”

Lord Pynsent here cut short his brother peer by professing his grateful acceptance of this magnificent donation.

While the Earl was thus copiously disserting on his favourite topic, Sir Cavendish had transferred his attention to the ladies, whom he was amusing by recounting the most recent fashionable *on dits*, describing Lord Pentonville's new house, and the splendid establishment which Lady Jane St Lawrence was about to acquire, by becoming the bride of a certain Mr Blackmore, a wealthy Oriental, who had recently returned with heavy pockets and disordered liver from Bengal. For myself, I found little opportunity for conversation with Lady Melicent during the rest of dinner, and what did pass between us, was of that light and general kind, which, when the words cease to vibrate on the ear, passes away and is forgotten. Mr Pynsent, too, was assiduous in his attentions, and divided her notice; and though my vanity told me I had no reason to shrink from competition with such a rival, still in affairs of love I had a vague consciousness that the battle is not always to the strong, and that Mr Pynsent, heir to a coronet, possessed advantages to which I could lay no claim.

The dinner was succeeded by the dessert, the

dessert by the departure of the ladies, and the gentlemen were left to the unrestrained enjoyment of their own masculine dulness. With its cause likewise fled my inspiration. A lassitude crept over me—I was thoughtful and absent, and anxious only for the moment which should bring with it an adjournment to the drawing-room. Lord Amersham, apparently attributing my reserve to boyish shyness, endeavoured to draw me into conversation; talked of hounds and horses, and other topics calculated to operate as excitements to youthful eloquence. Lord Pynsent, too, was kind and urbane, introduced me particularly to the notice of his son, and gave me an invitation to his house in town. The young gentleman, who, till now, had eyed me askance, and considered it impossible that a person whose coat was evidently made by a country tailor, could be worthy of any notice on his part, now deemed it necessary to make some advances to an acquaintance, and addressed me in a few condescending remarks. My answers were dictated by a spirit as cold and aristocratic as his own, and the conversation, after languishing through a succession of vapid and uninteresting observa-

tions and replies, died at length a natural death from mere exhaustion of matter.

The wished-for moment, however, came at last, and we adjourned to the drawing-room. When we entered, Lady Melicent was singing to her own accompaniment on the harp. Her voice, even an indifferent auditor must have admitted to be charming; to me it was the voice of an angel sounding in celestial music from the spheres. Her figure, as she bent forward to the instrument, was fine, and something even of poetical grace seemed to be shed over and around her. The song was the hymn of the Venetian Mariner, a wild, beautiful, and simple air, which it might soothe the most troubled spirit to hear borne by the sea-breeze at the close of twilight, over the sleeping waters of the Adriatic. The low and tremulous swell with which the words "Oh Santissima, oh Purissima!" were murmured at the commencement of the song, the almost sublime altitude and volume of voice with which she gave sound to the increasing fervour of praise and adoration as it advanced, are at this moment in my ears, like the voice of a departed spirit, fainter yet the same.

I stood mute and motionless, scarcely daring to breathe till the music ceased, and she arose from the instrument. The enchantment which bound me, then changed its character without losing its power. Leaning on the arm of Sir Cavendish, and laughing as she advanced, she passed me without a look, and seated herself beside Miss Pynsent on an opposite ottoman. The knight stood before them, apparently engaged in the narration of some amusing anecdote, which succeeded in drawing forth abundance of wreathed smiles from his fair auditors. But the mothers, not the daughters, were the more peculiar objects of his attentions; and he soon retired, leaving the field open to more youthful competitors. Mr Pynsent succeeded him, and, seated beside Lady Melicent, all hopes of a nearer approach on my part seemed for the present cut off.

I sat ruminating on a fauteuil, my eyes fixed with a half vacant stare on an equestrian portrait of one of the family progenitors, by Vandyck. It was a noble picture—the attitude bold and commanding, the costume gorgeous and

graceful, and the horse,—nothing could be finer. It was such a horse, as, according to the description of Job, might be supposed to “say unto the trumpets, ha, ha! and to laugh at the strength of the armed men.”

Not one scintilla of approbation, however, did this splendid performance extract from me. My organs of perception were in full activity, but the connexion between these and the mind was broken; I saw and did not see. Engrossed by my own thoughts, I was yet perfectly free from all moodiness and mental depression. It has been truly said by Godwin, that our waking dreams are those of activity and power, our sleeping ones of passive sufferance. Mine were dreams of glory and of pride, of happy love and gratified ambition, and perhaps not less baseless and ridiculous than that of Alnaschar in the eastern story. Be their character, however, what it might, they were abruptly broken by the sound of my name pronounced by Lady Melicent. I started up, the Guardsman was gone, and she beckoned me to approach, pointing at the same time to a stool in front of the sofa, which stood nearly equidistant from herself and Miss Pyn-

sent. The signal was obeyed with joyful alacrity.

“Really, Mr Thornton,” said she, addressing me in a tone of playful raillery, “this will never do. You are fast acquiring the character of a dull, stupid, and disagreeable person. Since you entered the drawing-room, you have not uttered one syllable, but have sat like Patience on a monument, in an arm-chair, as fixed and immovable as the picture you have been staring at. To punish you, I retract the half promise I gave you at dinner, to interest Miss Pynsent in your favour, so far as to keep the secret of your morning’s exhibition, and leave you to advocate your own cause. Nay, do not be alarmed, my dear Julia, at the idea of a tête-à-tête—I only go for a moment to speak to papa, and I assure you, he is not quite so bad as he appears—a little stupid and silent at first, but he improves a good deal on nearer acquaintance.”

So saying, she tripped away, leaving me to perform a task for which I felt little inclination.

In a drawing-room the distance of a yard or two constitutes for some purposes a solitude as

complete as one could enjoy in the very centre of the great desert of Zahara ; and left alone with Miss Pynsent, there was quite privacy enough to be disagreeable, that is, to make us feel mutually awkward, and at the same time to impose the necessity of immediate advances to conversation. Lady Amersham, Lord and Lady Pynsent, and Sir Cavendish, were engaged in a *partie carrée* at cards, and Lord Amersham, who had hitherto amused himself in overlooking the game, and criticising the play of all parties, was now half reclining with his daughter on a *chaise longue*, her beautiful arm encircling his neck, and her countenance affording a strong contrast in juxtaposition to his indented and hard-featured visage. Mr Pynsent was seated at a remote table, apparently deeply engaged in the studying a portfolio of prints of military costume. From the party thus variously occupied, there appeared no immediate hope of any seasonable interruption to our interview, and I felt obliged, *invita Minerva*, to set seriously about the task of making myself agreeable. There can be nothing more cloudy and unhopeful than the first dawn of conversational

intercourse between a town-bred lady and a young gentleman born and educated in the country, who has never even approached within eyeshot of the metropolis. Between such persons there appears no channel of approximation. The opera, balls, parties, and Hyde Park, are cut off on the one hand, and all matters of provincial interest are equally a dead letter on the other. Still when two people, however different in habit and ideas, are anxious to be agreeable, the means of accomplishing their object will rarely be found wanting. In the most dissimilar characters there will be found, on nearer view, some points of contact, some coincidences of sentiment and feeling, some unison of tastes, solid enough to serve as the foundation of such a light and fragile superstructure of regard, as is requisite for the purposes of pleasant intercourse in society. With this hypothesis, at least, my own experience coincided. The awkwardness of first address was at length surmounted, and the conversation of Miss Pynsent and myself became easy and agreeable. The young lady was, fortunately, fond of poetry and romance, and talked enthusiastically, and not

ungracefully, of Marmion, the Pleasures of Hope, and the Mysteries of Udolpho. Coincidence or difference of opinion on these subjects, naturally led to the introduction of others equally interesting. In short, when an interruption to our colloquy did at length occur, it found me sailing with a fair breeze on smooth waters, and was received with none of that thankfulness with which, at an earlier moment, it would have been welcomed. In return for the apparent partiality which had led to an hour's tête-à-tête with their daughter, both Lord and Lady Pynsent regarded me with eyes of favour, and were profuse in their civilities. The secret of all this perhaps was, that though in a matrimonial point of view, I was infinitely beneath the acceptance of a person of the very high pretensions that attached to the Lady Melicent; yet, in the eyes of the world, I was by no means an ineligible match for Miss Pynsent, without fortune, and the eldest daughter of a tolerably numerous family. So probably thought Lord and Lady Pynsent, who were apparently resolved that no want of encouragement on their part should diminish the chance of their procuring an unexception-

able establishment for their daughter. Of such views, however, if such did exist, I was entirely unconscious, and was disposed, in my ignorance of the world, to attribute the very favourable *accueil* which I experienced from both parents, either to disinterested benevolence on their part, or to uncommon powers of prepossession on mine.

Thus did the first evening of my sojourn at Staunton pass away; and when, on retiring to my chamber, I cast a retrospective glance on the day just closed, I found I could regard it altogether with a degree of tranquil complacency, far greater than the character of some of its occurrences might have led me to anticipate. The long excitement and consequent exhaustion of my spirits, soon brought their natural restorative, and when slumber that night descended on my eyelids (need I say it?) the Lady Melicent was in my dreams.

CHAPTER XVI.

Fancies and notions he pursues,
Which ne'er had being but in thought,
And, like the Grecian artist, views
The image he himself has wrought.

PRIOR.

——Who comes from the chamber?
It is Azrael, the angel of death.

THALABA.

My sojourn in the world of dreams continued till the sound of the morning-bell recalled me to the perception and the consciousness of grosser and more material entities. Few moments were necessary to restore my senses to their wonted activity, and I sprung up to prepare for participation in the pleasures and business of that less visionary world of which I again found myself a denizen. My preparations, however, were made with less facility than usual. The duties of the toilet were protracted for a space considerably transcending the limits ordinarily found sufficient for their due discharge. I was

uncommonly fastidious about the adjustment of my hair, displayed through the interstice of my waistcoat an unwonted superfluity of frill, and, after many unsuccessful experiments, remember of being eventually by no means satisfied with the tie of my cravat. On descending, I found the party (with the exception of Lady Amersham, who seldom appeared till considerably later in the day,) assembled in the breakfast-room. Lord Amersham, in his morning habiliments, exhibited the same grotesque figure which had excited my astonishment the day before at our meeting in the park. After breakfast, which he dispatched as hurriedly as possible, his lordship addressed many apologies to Lady Pynsent for his speedy departure.

“ Your ladyship will, I hope, excuse me, but we farmers, Lady Pynsent, cannot neglect our calling, or our calling will neglect us; the eye of the master must overlook, as the proverb goes, or the plough will speed badly. If your ladyship only knew the torrent of business I have to encounter.—In the first place, my wool; I have to receive offers for that, and sell to the best bidder—never show favour or affection in

a case of that sort—all fair and above board—sealed offers, and the highest carries the day. Then comes Tompkinson with contract for two steam engines, thirty-horse power, to set the coal-mines a-going. People may talk of the Golconda mines as much as they please, but none are so valuable, you may take my word for it, Lady Pynsent, as the black diamond mines. Then I have to superintend the preparation of my two-bout ridges, an original invention of my own; no succession of crops necessary—wheat—wheat for ever, and the soil never exhausted—fresh as after the first crop. Quite a new era in farming—expect to be awarded the gold medal at the next meeting of the Agricultural Society. Mr Coke is jealous as the devil of my success, and Sir John Sinclair pretends to undervalue it. Sir John is a Scotchman, so no wonder. But your ladyship must not seduce me to stand tittle-tattling a moment longer. I must endeavour to carry off Lord Pynsent, however.—Lord Pynsent, is your lordship inclined this morning for a walk to the farm? You know t'other day we were inter-

rupted by the rain, and I had not time to show you half my lions."

As an excuse for declining the proffered honour, Lord Pynsent pleaded the fact of having that morning received important letters, which required to be answered by return of post.

"Well, then, young gentlemen," said Lord Amersham, addressing Mr Pynsent and myself, "I must lay an embargo on you. One of you is a fighting man already, and the other, I dare say, would give his ears to become one; but the time will come at last, when, like me, you will imitate Cincinnatus, and turn your swords into ploughshares, and the sooner you begin to prepare for the change the better. As for you, Mr Thornton, I want you to be able to tell your father all about my improvements, for I know he has a taste for farming. Come along, come along—not a moment to spare. Good morning, *au revoir*, ladies; necessity, you know—dire necessity"—And, without finishing the sentence, his lordship waddled out into the hall, and, having seized his long weeding-hook, and ensconced his cranium in the broad-brimmed

drab-coloured hat already commemorated, we set out for the farm.

Most probably, good reader, you are not a farmer, and have not the smallest curiosity to be troubled at length with the details of the many inventions and improvements with which on that morning we were made acquainted. Suffice it, therefore, that it was proved by his lordship to demonstration, that the simplest operations of husbandry might be performed, if need were, by very complicated machinery ; that capital, to almost any extent, may be expended on the soil, without any adequate return ; and, lastly, that farming by a nobleman on a great scale, however strong his partiality for the business may be, is, of all modes of employing an estate, the most unprofitable. Such are the principal corollaries that appeared to flow naturally from an involuntarily minute inspection of Lord Amersham's home farm. At the commencement of my task, I was not without hopes of effecting my escape, after cursorily examining the more prominent wonders of the scene, and Mr Pynsent with some difficulty did so, pleading an engagement to drive Lady Amersham in

her pony-chair. But his success only seemed to increase the obstacles to mine. In short, all my hopes and efforts proved alike abortive, and, making a merit of necessity, I submitted with the best grace I could to the penance that awaited me. Had I been merely called on to admire luxuriant crops, and specimens of mechanical ingenuity, the task might have been dull, but not positively unpleasant. But this was by no means all. Lord Amersham's experiments extended to the animal as well as the vegetable creation. There was a huge, bloated, scrofulous-looking animal, stall-fed on rape and oil-cake, its limbs tottering under its unnatural and prodigious weight. A sight more thoroughly disgusting it is scarcely possible to conceive; yet this was called, *par excellence*, "the Staunton Ox," to which the gold medal had been awarded by the Agricultural Society! Then there were pigs, the very sight of which was almost enough to justify a man for turning Jew, and making the abjuration of bacon a part of his religion. And sheep too—but enough.

My patience was completely exhausted by the occupation of the morning, which seemed

to me interminable. We returned to the house just in time to dress for dinner. The party assembled in the drawing-room was the same as on the preceding day. I had taken my situation beside Lady Melicent, in order to watch the opportunity, when dinner should be announced, of offering myself as her escort. In this I was baffled. Whether Lady Amersham perceived my intention, I know not, but she decreed me the unwelcome honour of supporting her to the dining-room, and the Lady Melicent followed, leaning on the arm of Sir Cavendish. At dinner I sat next Miss Pynsent, who had thrown off much of that *retenu* of manner in conversing with me, which had rather predominated at our first interview. She was amiable, modest, frank, and unaffected, and never descended to the use of those vulgar arts of captivation, which, in the present day, even demoiselles of high caste do not always scruple to employ.

To a young man whose feelings are fresh, and yet unblunted by worldly experience, there is a charm even in the most unimpassioned intercourse with the other sex. Woman ! To him how vast a charm is comprised in the narrow

compass of a word ! In this single abstraction, unconnected it may be with any individual reality, are united all his purest dreams of happiness, all his brightest conceptions of imaginary beauty. With it no thought of grossness or sensuality comes to contaminate his fancy or his heart. This is at once the portion and the penalty of greyhaired debauchery, the wormwood which mingles in the cup of pleasure, changing the sparkling contents of the goblet to bitterness and poison.

Whether from accident or design, I enjoyed but few opportunities of particular conversation with Lady Melicent. When these did occur, she maintained towards me the same light and *riant* manner with which I had been originally delighted. Still, charming as it was, I should have been better pleased had she exchanged it for one more congenial to the sentiments of which I was myself conscious. It was a manner that expressed no feeling, and gave an apparent denial to my fondly-cherished hopes of having created in her heart a strong impression in my favour. But what right had I to expect that anything in our trifling intercourse had,

or could have, inspired such sentiments, in one accustomed to receive, and to neglect, homage as deep, and admiration more flattering, than mine? None; and yet the disappointment was not the less deeply felt, because it was unreasonable. Who is there, in whom youthful vanity has not excited such hopes, to whom it has not occasioned such disappointments? If such a person exists, he is a being cold and calculating, dull of heart and fancy. Poet, Hero, or Patriot, he can never be. Philosopher—yes, in the modern sense of the term, he *may* be a philosopher. But, with such a one I have no communion of spirit; our lot and our portion have been cast apart; let him close this book, nor listen further to the confession of follies which he will despise, of frailties for which his heart can afford no sympathy.

There was one person in company, of whom after a formal introduction to the reader, I have yet said nothing. I mean Miss Cumberbatch, who was generally seated at a small embroidery-table apparently engrossed by her work, and was seldom called on to take any share in the conversation or proceedings of the party.

The neglect with which she was treated, tended in no small degree to excite my compassion. She was *in* the party but not *of* it, a solitary person even when mingling in the crowded vortex of society. Miss Cumberbatch was still in the prime of life; in manner she was distant and reserved, and spoke and moved with that unvarying precision and propriety, which seemed to indicate that every thought and motion had been decided on and selected as that best suited to her character and circumstances. There was, in short, a good deal of the automaton about her, her manners were obviously artificial, she courted no notice, and received little, and "*noli me tangere*," was pretty legibly expressed in her air of self-concentration and retirement.

There was nothing in all this very tempting to a nearer approach, but a degree of curiosity mingled with my compassion, and I repeatedly took advantage of circumstances to engage her in conversation. My attempts in this way, though not absolutely repulsed, were coldly received; my questions elicited only monosyllabic replies, my best jokes were "damned with faint smiles," my very cleverest observations

barely assented to "with civil leer." In short, like the north pole, there was a frozen barrier around her, which I had not enough of Captain Parry about me to attempt very perseveringly to penetrate. Under such unpromising circumstances, my efforts gradually slackened, and at length resigning a task so apparently hopeless, Miss Cumberbatch remained, as formerly, solitary and unnoticed.

The first few days of my stay at Staunton were passed with little variation to distinguish them from those already described. I occasionally walked and rode with Lady Melicent, but never alone. Her manner towards me remained unchanged; and though I did flatter myself she felt a preference for my society over that of Mr Pynsent, mingled perhaps with some degree of personal regard, yet of this preference and partiality I could detect no unequivocal or palpable demonstration. The quiet tenor of affairs, however, was soon about to undergo a change. The week following was that of York races, and Staunton Court was then to be the rendezvous of a large and distinguished party. All was to be bustle and gaiety, and the anticipated

pleasures and arrangements became matter of eager speculation to the younger part of the circle. In these projections of future enjoyment, I was a warm participator. The expected scene was armed with too many attractions, both accessory and intrinsic, to fail in exciting a strong interest in a mind susceptible as mine was of every external stimulus. The charm too was rendered more powerful, from the knowledge that the pleasures, to which with so much boyish eagerness I looked forward, would be heightened by the smiles and the society of her by whom my thoughts were engrossed. In this mutable world hope constitutes our greatest, might I not almost say our *only* enjoyment. At all events I was happy. There appeared in my horizon no cloud to shadow either the present or the future. Above and around, all was brightness and sunshine, and time flew by "on rapid, rapid wings."

The expected day came at last. Splendid equipages were seen in the intervals of the trees, gliding like meteors through the park, and sounding titles were pronounced loudly in the vestibule. The establishment were evidently

immersed in the bustle of preparation for the reception of guests of no ordinary consequence, and my eye encountered servants in sumptuous and strange liveries, as I passed through the hall. Captivated by the pomp and circumstance of the scene, in which I flattered myself I was about to play no undistinguished part, I went forth into the park to indulge in the luxury of solitary reflection, and seek an escape in rapid motion, for the preternatural activity of an excited imagination. An hour or two's smart exercise had in some degree produced the desired effect, the tumult of my thoughts had subsided, the flush had left my cheek, and my steps were again turned toward the house. The walk I followed, led in a rectangular direction to the principal approach, and as I advanced with leisurely steps, my attention was attracted by the appearance of a carriage, plain and without servants, and forming altogether rather a contrast to the gayer equipages with which my eye had recently become familiar. The smoking flanks of the horses, and their nostrils covered with foam, gave indication that the journey of the traveller had been performed with unu-

sual speed; and the frequent and loud crack of the whips of the postilions, alternating with the voice of the cuckoo from the distant trees, and the nearer song of the linnet, formed a discord unpleasing to the ear, and broke harshly the sweet unison of nature's music. It passed within a few yards of me, but its progress was suddenly arrested by a loud voice from within, calling vehemently on the postilions to stop. They obeyed the mandate, the door of the carriage flew open, and I saw before me, Humphreys, my father's steward. My first emotion was that of surprise and pleasure, and I ran towards the old man and shook him cordially by the hand. Suddenly my heart was chilled by terrible forebodings, and I started back from him, for I felt he was the ill-omened messenger of fearful tidings. For a minute there was silence. I had no words to ask of what dreadful news he was the bearer, but I looked upon him with keen and fixed gaze, endeavouring to read the dreadful secret in his countenance. That was heavy and mournful, and haggard with sleepless travelling. At length I could bear the agonies of suspense no longer, and exclaimed, "Tell, — Oh, tell me, I conjure you, what has hap-

pened ! Who is dead ? My father, mother, Jane, Lucy ? Speak, say whose loss I am to deplore, I can bear anything but suspense. Speak, as you hope for God's mercy, speak, and speak quickly !”

“ I have a heavy and grievous task to perform, my dear young master,” began the old man, while the tears stood in his eyes.

In a voice of impatient agony I interrupted him.

“ Who ? Who ? Who ? Quick—tell me but the name !” and I grasped him roughly by the arm as I spoke.

“ My honoured lady, your mother”—

“ Is dead !” exclaimed I, striking my clenched hands violently against my forehead.

“ No, not dead,” replied he, raising his grey lustreless eyes to my face. “ When I left Thornhill she was ill, but not dead.”

“ But she is dying ?”

“ Life is in God's hands,” said the old man, “ he gives and he takes away.”

“ But is there no hope ?” said I, relieved at the same time by a gush of tears and a convulsive sob ; “ is this dreadful, this fatal blow inevitable ?”

“Humanly speaking, yes. The physicians have declared her past hope, and her recovery, if God wills she should recover, can owe nothing to the assistance of man.”

Stupified by the intelligence, I stood for some time in a state of helpless distraction. “And am I never more to see, to embrace her, to receive no parting kiss, no dying blessing !”

“Yes, my dearest young master, if God so wills it, you may yet see and embrace your angel-mother. It is for this purpose I am come; it is in obedience to her anxious and dying wish, that she may yet live to embrace and to bless her beloved,—her only son. But time is short and life uncertain; we must be speedy.”

“Enough,” I exclaimed with sudden increase of energy; “in ten minutes I shall be prepared to return with you to Thornhill;” and springing into the carriage, I directed the postilions to proceed directly to the house.

In the space of a minute or two, the carriage had drawn up at the portal, and in little more, I had issued orders to my servant for instant departure. My spirits had become more calm and collected; I felt there was an awful duty

for me to perform, and the hope of once more pressing my beloved mother in my arms, of soothing by my presence her last moments, roused me to exertion. Precious as time was, I felt it was proper that I should not depart without seeking a moments interview with Lord or Lady Amersham, and explaining the cause of my abrupt departure. I rung for a servant, and inquired for Lord Amersham.

“ His lordship is not within.”

“ Lady Amersham ?”

“ Lady Amersham has gone out airing with the Marchioness of Uttoxeter in her pony phaeton.”

“ The Lady Melicent ?”

“ The Lady Melicent is at home.”

“ Then go and present to her this note,” said I, seizing the writing materials that stood on the table, and writing the following words on a slip of paper,—“ I am obliged instantly to depart—I wished to have seen Lord or Lady Amersham, but find it is impossible. Will Lady Melicent honour me with an interview of one moment, when I will endeavour to speak (for

I cannot write) of the misfortune which has occasioned this singular request?—Cyril Thornton.”

I was not long kept in suspense, for, in a minute or two after my note had been dispatched, Lady Melicent entered the apartment.

“What is this, Mr Thornton?” said she, starting when she beheld the altered expression of my countenance; “what has happened to make you leave us so abruptly? Your father—your mother—your sisters, I hope, are well—no family misfortune——”

“Yes, a sad one—I have received intelligence by a messenger, informing me that my mother is dying, and that instant departure affords my only chance of yet seeing her alive. I have taken the liberty of soliciting this interview, to request you will offer my sincere thanks to Lord and Lady Amersham for their kindness.—To *you*, Lady Melicent, to *you*—pardon me, I am confused by this dreadful blow, and cannot say what I ought—think all I should feel, in bidding you farewell, and—believe I feel it.”

She was moved, and there was moisture in her eyes, as she replied,—

“ I feel,—I deeply feel for you,” she said, holding out her hand at the same time, which was instantly pressed in mine.—“ For my father and mother, as well as for myself, I may say, you carry with you our sympathy and best wishes for your happiness ; and, as a relation,— I may add”—she here hesitated, and a slight flush rose to her cheek as she spoke,—“ our kind remembrance and regard. On an occasion like this, I would not delay you an instant—Farewell, farewell.”

The last word was spoken in so low a tone as to be scarcely audible, and as she pronounced it, she half averted her head.

“ Farewell !” I exclaimed, lingering on the word, and aware it must be the last ; and raising her fingers to my lips, which she made no effort to withdraw, I rushed from the apartment, and in a moment after felt myself whirled rapidly through the park on my return to Thornhill.

CHAPTER XVII.

The voices of my home! I hear them still!
They have been with me through the dreamy night,—
The blessed household voices, wont to fill
My heart's clear depths with unalloy'd delight!
I hear them still unchanged,—though some from earth
Are music parted; and the tones of mirth,—
Wild silvery tones, that rang through days more bright,
Have died in others, yet to me they come,
Singing of boyhood back,—the voices of my home!

Forest Sanctuary.

WE travelled in silence. My grief could brook no communion, and my aged companion, worn out alike by the agitation of his spirits and the fatigues of his journey, sought in sleep, deep though interrupted, the refreshment necessary for his exhausted frame. I was pleased at this. The presence of a human eye seemed an intrusion on the sacredness of my sorrow, and I felt that solitude was freedom. We journeyed with all the speed that money could command. Day gradually faded into darkness, the long night-hours passed away, and the glorious sun was

once more abroad in the firmament. But these changes passed unheeded. External nature was to me a blank—my eyes saw only the image of my dying mother—the sound of her sweet and feeble voice was in my ears—the hope of once more beholding her alive, of soothing her last moments by my presence, occupied and engrossed my heart. We approached Thornhill in the evening of the following day, and I beheld once more the familiar objects of my youth. Under circumstances how sad and melancholy was I again restored to them !

As we passed through the adjacent village, I looked from the carriage, perhaps expecting to discover in the countenances and deportment of the inhabitants, traces of that sorrow and sympathy which the loss of so kind a benefactress might be expected to inspire. No change was discernible—the business and the pleasures of humble life were proceeding as usual, the sound of revelry and merriment was heard from the little inn in the market-place, groups of ragged urchins were at play, and the labourers, after the toils of the day, were singing merrily as they returned from the hay-field. I could not bear

to look on this scene of tranquil happiness, and closing my eyes, and throwing myself back in the carriage, opened them not till we had entered the avenue to Thornhill.

The day, which had been a fine one, had set in clouds, and the wind roared loudly among the trees. The ravens sailing homeward to their rookery amid the tall chestnut-trees, rose and descended in their course, as if tempest-tost on airy billows, and, uttering their harsh notes, seemed birds of evil omen. I listened for the cooing of the ring-dove, in which I had formerly delighted, but it came not from the wood; and even the multitude of smaller songsters were mute. To me all nature seemed joined in one mournful presage.

The house now rose upon my view, canopied by a dark thunder-cloud, so low that it seemed almost to rest upon the roof. In a minute more all my dreadful fears would be resolved into certainty. I wished, and yet I feared to know the worst, and I sat in awful stillness, waiting the arrival of the moment that was to end my suspense. We approached the front of the house, and the windows were closed. The smoke

from the chimney tops alone gave indication that it was tenanted by living beings. At length the carriage stopped, and I stood once more on my paternal threshold.

Nearly a minute elapsed before the signal of my arrival was answered, and that minute seemed to me an age. The door was opened at last by old Jacob Pearson, whose countenance was lit up by a mournful smile on beholding me. I rushed instantly into the hall, exclaiming, "My mother—how—where is my mother?—I must see her instantly!"

"Alas! you cannot see her, but my master——"

"O God, she is dead!" exclaimed I, tottering into a chair, and covering my face with my hands. Jacob was silent, and I knew the truth. I remained for some time in a state of helpless stupefaction,—how long I know not.

When I regained my senses, I felt the pressure of little fingers on my temples, and of warm kisses on the cold hands by which my eyes were still covered. I looked up, and it was little Lucy smiling on me, yet with eyes red with weeping. I snatched her to my arms, and

covered her with my tears and kisses. Strangely constituted is the human heart!—As I gazed on the beauty, and felt the infantine caresses of this innocent and simple child, the burden of my grief became less grievous, and I was soothed and comforted. And Jane, too, had left her station by the death-bed, and came to welcome her brother. She was pale, and worn by long watching in the sleepless hours of the night; but her sorrow was calm and resigned. Few words were interchanged at this mournful meeting, and encircling my orphan sisters in one fond embrace, our tears were mingled in silence, and we prayed together to that Being, by whom the prayers of an afflicted and bruised spirit are never disregarded.

The passionate turbulence of my grief thus passed away, and from the meek, though suffering resignation of my sister Jane, I learned to bend before the blow which had fallen so heavily upon us, and implicitly to submit to His inscrutable decrees, in whose hands are the issues of life. My heart was softened by suffering; and when I gazed on Jane and Lucy, bereaved and motherless by the same sad dispen-

sation, I felt how little it became me to indulge in violent and selfish grief, with those around me whose loss had been great as my own.

By Jane I was informed of all the particulars connected with the last moments of our dear departed parent ; that the progress of her complaint, which was an inflammatory one, had been unusually rapid ; that, in the endurance of the deepest bodily suffering, her mind had been serene, and her patience exemplary ; that, aware of the fatal termination which was fast approaching, she had expressed a wish to press her son yet once again to her bosom ; that the last efforts of her expiring strength had been to write a letter to myself, containing her parting injunctions ; that she had uniformly spoken of me with the warmest affection, and with her latest breath bequeathed me her blessing. I learned also, that the grief of my father, on learning the fatal character of my mother's complaint, had been intense ; that, since her death, he had secluded himself from his family, in the solitude of his own apartment, where he sorrowed as one that had no hope.

Such was the outline of the details I received, connected with the sad event, and they carried with them consolation. That my mother's last wish of again beholding me had not been gratified, I felt comforted in thinking, was not attributable to any want of exertion on my part. All I could wish to know,—that she had loved me to the last, blessed me, and prayed for me,—I had now learned. Exhausted as I was by fatigue, strong mental emotion, and want of sustenance, (for two days had elapsed since I had taken food,) Jane grew alarmed at the visible ebbing of my strength, and entreated me, with loving earnestness, to take the refreshment evidently so needful, and retire to rest. But rest I felt was impossible, till I had visited the chamber of death, and gazed on all that yet remained to us of our beatified mother. I wished to go alone, but Jane entreated to accompany me, and little Lucy would not be denied. Clinging together, as if for mutual support, and with palpitating hearts, we entered the apartment, and our footsteps were as soft and noiseless, as if we had indeed feared to disturb the sleep of the dead. On the bed, which was surrounded by wax-lights, lay

the cold and inanimate remains of our beloved mother. The expression of the countenance was calm and tranquil, and the death-agony had passed over it without leaving any traces of its violence on the features. Yet the repose I beheld was evidently not that of sleep ; on every lineament the signet of death was too visibly impressed, to be mistaken even for a moment. The body was wrapped in a winding-sheet of white satin, and the thin pale hands were crossed upon the breast. The coffin stood open at the foot of the bed, waiting for its inmate, and recalled the sad recollections of how soon even these poor relics were to be taken from us for ever. While these remained to us, it seemed as if our lost parent were not wholly gone, and while I gazed on them, I felt all the truth of the sentiment, (and what heart in such circumstances has not felt it ?) so beautifully embodied in the words of Charles Wolfe—

If thou wouldst stay, even as thou art,
All cold and all serene—
I still might press thy silent heart,
And where thy smiles have been.
While e'en thy chill bleak corse I have,
Thou seemest all mine own ;
But there, I lay thee in the grave,
And now—I am alone !

I stood for a short space with my sisters, gazing on the mournful sight before us ; then gently withdrawing my arms, I advanced alone to the bed, and bending forward, imprinted the last kiss of filial love on the cold hard lips of my beloved mother, and watered her face with my tears. Then kneeling, with Jane and Lucy by my side, we made our common prayers to the throne of Grace, for comfort and support in this hour of trial.

At length we left the chamber, and when we separated for the night, sleep profound and tranquil visited my eyelids.

I forbear to dwell on the recollections connected with my mother's death. My father remained secluded, even from the society of his family, and was not present at the funeral. A week had elapsed since my return to Thornhill, and yet I had not been admitted to his presence. I felt this estrangement deeply, the more so perhaps, that I appeared to be its exclusive object. To his daughters he had certainly never been a fond father, and it was evident that the place which Charles had filled in his affections, was destined to be occupied by no successor. They, however, were occasionally admitted to

the privacy of his apartment, and Jane was frequently employed in reading to him, till the utter exhaustion of her strength occasioned the intermission of her task. The ban was extended to me alone, and it seemed as if, by my mother's death, the only link that had bound us together, had been snapped in twain.

Time, however, which, in all cases of sorrow, is the best and most efficacious physician, brought to my father's grief its natural healing effects, and after an interval of some weeks, he once more quitted his habits of rigid solitude, and betook himself to his ordinary avocations. But there were few of these in which the loss of my mother was not sensibly felt. She was in a manner entwined with all his pleasures and pursuits. In a thousand unknown and imperceptible ways, she had contributed to his comfort; and the verdure which she had scattered on his path, and the flowers with which she had adorned it, were perhaps only first discovered, when the hand that spread them was gone for ever. His, therefore, was a loss neither to be supplied nor forgotten. It was recalled to him in every occupation—in health and sickness, in solitude

and society. To his temper, unfortunately, affliction brought no healing balm—it came like the toad, ugly and venomous, but bore no jewel in its head. In early life he had been an ambitious man, and, by the loss of fortune, his schemes of ambition had been blighted. In bitterness of spirit he had withdrawn himself from society, and sought for happiness in study and retirement, and the quiet enjoyments of domestic life. Of these enjoyments my mother was the very life and essence, and with her, they too perished. He had suffered much—dispensations heavy to bear had been laid upon him—he had felt the terrible smiting of an almighty arm, but from its inflictions he had not risen “a wiser and a better man.” To me he had ever been an object rather of fear than affection. I had wished to love him, but could not; for, even in the case of parent and child, bound together as they are by nature’s closest and most powerful ligaments, love, to exist at all, must be reciprocal.

When we met, his reception of me was cold and embarrassing. Since he last saw me, I had studied, and with some distinction, at College.

My mind had been opened and enlarged—I had laid up some trifling stores at least, of liberal and useful knowledge ; and my father was himself a man of elegant taste and literature, well qualified to discern and appreciate the extent of my acquirements. Whatever change in these respects, however, was discernible, he regarded without interest, and to him my mind was destined to remain a sealed volume, the contents of which he cared not to know. We were, in short, as two planets kept separate by a repulsive power, which, while it prevented the possibility of nearer approach, unfortunately was not opposed to an unlimited divergence.

My father's ideas of family government, were evidently of the most despotic kind. He was little disposed in any case to mitigate the harshness of command, in proportion to the advancement in years and knowledge of those who were subject to his sway. Least of all in mine. To me his authority was always put forward in its most offensive form ; and even in instances where the slightest intimation of his wishes would have been sufficient to guide and regulate my conduct, he preferred to govern by the ex-

ercise of command, rendered only more offensive because it was felt to be gratuitous.

My temper too was high, and how long I might have submitted to such unreasonable despotism without deviating into rebellion, unfurnished with stronger motives to obedience, than my own perception of the propriety of filial submission could supply, fortunately remained untried. In the letter which my mother had addressed to me on her death-bed, she made it her solemn and parting injunction, that I should under all circumstances comport myself towards my father with reverence and obedience, and that no harshness of treatment, no act of injustice, however marked on his part, should induce me to throw off my allegiance to my only parent.

The behest of a dying mother, was not, could not be disobeyed, by a spirit yet bleeding for her loss; and thus my rebellious heart still continued to yield a proud obedience to the stern mandates of parental authority.

With peculiar emphasis too, had my mother consigned my sisters to my especial care and support. She entreated that I would guard and

watch over them with more, if possible, than even brotherly anxiety, and that in every alternation of circumstances, I would prove their stay, their guardian, their protector, their friend. I read the letter alone and on my knees, and it seemed as if the voice of the dead might yet be listened to by mortal ear. I felt the magnitude of the trust thus confided to me, and I invoked the curses of God upon my head if ever I neglected or betrayed it.

A month or two had elapsed, and the current of affairs at Thornhill had subsided into the channel in which it seemed hereafter destined to flow. It was evident that the health of my father had suffered considerably, yet little change was visible in his habits and deportment. But his temper was subject to more frequent and violent exacerbations. He mingled less frequently than formerly in the family circle, over which his presence never failed to cast a gloom, and his favourite and grey-haired domestics were treated with an austerity and harshness, to which they had been unaccustomed.

What his views were relative to myself, I had not yet learned, nor had I made known to

him my own wishes with regard to the choice of a profession. Meanwhile the languid monotony of my life was becoming daily more intolerable. It is true, I had my dogs and my horses, and my amusements were now a matter of too great indifference to my father to become the objects of restraint. But it was neither the season for hunting nor shooting, and I felt certain "prophetic swellings in my breast," which told me I was destined for higher things, than to become a mere

"Fishing, hawking, hunting country gentleman."

In the society of my sisters, to whom I had now become the chief object of attachment, I felt indeed a never-failing resource. I read aloud to Jane, while engaged in her work, heard the lessons of little Lucy, and played with her at Blindman's Buff, rode and walked with both, and amused them with descriptions of Scottish scenery and manners, their Highland relations, and the eccentricities of our rich uncle the Glasgow merchant. But such placid enjoyments are better suited to the decline of life

than its commencement. To a mind youthful and ardent, which pants for the full exercise of its powers and passions, they are but as dew-drops on the mane of the sleeping lion, glittering and beautiful in themselves, but which he shakes from him unheeded, when he rouses himself to action. My schoolfellows and companions had already gone abroad into the world. William Lumley was at Oxford, and about to take his Bachelor's degree; Conyers was a dragoon, and Jack Spencer had entered the navy and fought at Aboukir. And was I alone, in this busy and bustling world, to remain idle and inactive? Was I to drag on a life of thralldom and insignificance, subject to the whims and humours of a cold and capricious father? My very soul revolted at the thought. No! I would go forth and play such a part as became me, in the great theatre of the world. An ancient and honourable name should be illustrated by my achievements. I would seek my father. I would lay open to him the whole bent and passion of my soul, inform him of my resolutions, enforce their reasonableness, refute his objections, and if he still persisted in refusing

his consent, I would shake the dust from my feet as I quitted his threshold, go forth unaided and alone, enter as a volunteer in a regiment abroad, and with no sign "save men's opinion and my own good sword," would win my way to honour and distinction. Such were the visionary projects of youthful enthusiasm. Luckily I was not driven to receive practical proof of their futility.

While I was endeavouring to arrange my ideas for an *eclaircissement*, and hesitating whether I should solicit an interview verbally or by a letter, I received one morning a message from my father, commanding my presence in the library. My heart throbbed violently, for I felt the long-looked-for moment was come, in which the character of my future prospects, perhaps the happiness of my life, was to be decided. Endeavouring, therefore, to concentrate my ideas as much as, in the agitation of my thoughts, was possible, I proceeded to the conference, filled with the deepest anxiety for its result. When I entered the library, my father was seated at a table, engaged in writing, but on my entrance he rose, and having twice paced the

apartment, remained standing in front of the fire-place. Then turning towards me, and looking at me for the first time, he said, "Be seated." I obeyed.

"I have sent for you, sir," continued he, "because I think the time has at length arrived when it is fitting we should come to a mutual and clear understanding. You are a young man, and have your way to make in the world. Have you thought of a profession?"

"Long and deeply."

"And, of course, feel that your own knowledge and experience are of themselves perfectly competent to decide your choice? Is not this so?"

There was something of a sneer discernible on his countenance as he spoke, and I did not answer. He went on.

"You say you have considered the subject of your future profession long and deeply—coolly and dispassionately had been better words, and more to the purpose. You had once a boyish inclination for the army. Does this still continue, or has some newer whimsy supplanted it?—Speak, sir."

“ My sentiments are still unchanged. I feel that for no other profession has nature qualified me. In a military life are centered all my hopes and wishes, and my heart tells me I must be a soldier or nothing.”

“ So, I thought as much; and since I now understand your views and intentions, it is fitting you should understand mine. Mark well, sir, what I am about to say to you, for every syllable of it concerns you deeply. When Dr Lumley formerly communicated to me your wishes in regard to a profession, I need not tell you I had *two* sons, and *you* were the younger. As such, you could expect but a slender provision, and the military life is one in which poverty is perhaps attended with fewer evils and privations than any other. I did not, therefore, think it necessary to oppose your inclinations. Since then, you know how the aspect of this family has been changed. Deep and sad changes have occurred. Your elder brother is no more, and of his death *you* were the cause. I do not mean to accuse you—the *innocent* cause, if you will—but still by that very hand,” pointing as he spoke, and slightly shuddering, “ he received

his death ; and when you returned, I saw it—yes, I saw it—red with his blood. Nay, I would not willingly wound your feelings,” observing my emotion, “ but I have often thought, and cannot but still think, how much sorrow and suffering had been spared us all, had it but pleased God that you had never breathed, or had been mercifully snatched from us in the cradle.—Compose yourself.”

I had indeed need of composure. Had I been stretched on the rack, I feel convinced my sufferings would have been less acute than those I endured during this harsh and unfeeling address. As he uttered it, I kept my eyes fixed on his countenance, as if with all my energies collected to brave the storm. Not once, even when his words pierced deepest, did I withdraw them. At one moment, it seemed as if he quailed beneath their gaze, for he turned his face half from me, and looked upon the ground. I endeavoured, with all my strength, to be calm, and my face, I believe, was so ; but beneath, every nerve, and muscle of my body seemed heaved into distinct and separate action, which I had neither the power to command nor to re-

press. My frame shook as if with an ague. My father betrayed signs of vehement emotion, both in speech and gesture, and the composure he prescribed to me, was evidently not unwanted by himself. He paced several times up and down the apartment, and then confronting me, in his former station, he resumed :—

“ You are now an only son, and probably expect to enter on life with greater advantages and higher prospects than before. The world, of course, look on you, and you perhaps look upon yourself, as the heir to this estate. Indulge not in such a delusion. It is but justice to let you know your real situation. While another child of mine survives, Thornhill will never be yours. Such is my determination ; and if you view it calmly and aright, you ought not, you cannot, wish it otherwise. You have been made the instrument of divine vengeance on your family. Would you accept reward for this ? Through your murderous negligence your brother lost his life. Would you, could you, turn fratricide to profit, and take wages for your brother’s blood ? Think you, wealth thus acquired would come to you unburdened by a

curse? Or could you for a moment drown, amid its poor pitiful enjoyments, the remembrance of the price you paid for them? Believe me, in this respect, at least, I am not unjust to you, and doubt not that you would cast from you, as a loathsome thing, fortune so detestable and unhallowed in its acquisition. Were it otherwise, I should disown you for my son, and spurn you from my threshold. But enough. Expect nothing from me but the provision you were originally entitled to as a younger son. You now know the footing on which you will enter the world. Whatever your inclinations may be, in regard to your future pursuits, I will not oppose them. But ponder well before you decide. In the church there is a living in my gift, to which, if you take orders, you may reasonably look forward. In the army, I can assist you little. In this matter, however, I wish not to influence you; let the decision be your own. At present retire, and at some other time I will be glad to learn the issue of your deliberations."

I did not immediately obey the mandate to depart, but remained with my eyes still rivetted on the speaker, for some time after he con-

cluded his address, partly from a desire to be certain that I had now heard *all*, and partly, that from the agitation of my mind I did not at first feel my physical energies to be equal to the required task of locomotion. These, however, soon returned, and rising slowly from my chair, I bowed low to my father, and left the room.

My face felt heated, and my head overcharged with blood. I could not endure the atmosphere within doors, and seizing my hat, went forth into the air. About a gunshot in rear of the house, there rises a hill of considerable eminence, and wooded to the summit, on which stands a turret commanding a beautiful and extensive view of the neighbouring country. There, if there is a breath of wind stirring, you are sure to meet with it, and it was to this spot I bent my steps. During my walk, the scene which had just passed appeared but as a dream. I had a distinct idea of it as a whole, but I could not resolve it into its component parts, as one may perfectly remember the contour and expression of a face, though utterly unable to describe the features of which it is made up. But the influence of

the cooler atmosphere in which I had fixed my station, soon restored my memory to its wonted powers. I reflected long and deeply on the extraordinary address to which I had recently listened. I analyzed it in my mind, and endeavoured to recall, if possible, the very words he had spoken. I did this, I think, on the whole, calmly and deliberately. Resentment I certainly did feel, but not that resentment which seeks to pervert the motives of its object. I passed in review all my conduct to my father, from my very infancy. Towards him I stood acquitted, for I felt that the natural promptings of my heart had been to love and duty. What, then, had I done, that the greatest and most terrible misfortune of my life, under which even my reason had suffered temporary obscuration, should thus be cruelly recalled, and made matter of insidious and malignant charge? What heart but my father's could have done this? Was it not enough to disinherit me, and, by so doing, affix in the eyes of the world a stigma to my name, without adding insult and outrage to injury, torture to injustice? He could plead no provocation, no passion, no cha-

ing of the blood, to palliate the cowardly ferocity of this most assassin-like attack. No, it was made coolly and deliberately; and, with premeditated malice, a vital part had been selected for every stab.

The mere loss of fortune affected me but little, and though I felt internal consciousness, that the privation was unjust, yet worldly advantages had entered too little into my calculations of happiness, to occasion any very strong or poignant disappointment by their loss. The views of youth are seldom interested; the value of wealth is learned only by experience, and experience I had none. The inheritance of my fathers was about to pass from me, but in the possession of my sisters, I felt I could regard it without envy. It was against the cruel and implacable spirit which my father had betrayed towards me, that my whole soul rose in arms. The ocean, it seemed to me, could not separate us more widely than we were destined thenceforward to be divided. There was a gulf between us, which, once passed, like the Stygian river, could never be recrossed. The ties of filial love and reverence seemed to be unloosed

for ever, and the shackles of parental bondage to have fallen from my limbs.

And it was so. From that hour I was free and independent. My father saw in my calm and stately bearing, that his authority had passed away, and never afterwards attempted to control my actions. His manner towards me was more considerate and conciliating than formerly, and when, in a few days, I informed him, that my preference for a military life was decided and immutable, he received the communication in silence, and bowed his acquiescence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Love is a thing to which we soon consent,
As soon refuse,—but sooner far repent.

Thracian Wonder.

In those times,
Of all the treasures of my hopes and love
You were the exchequer. They were stored in *you*.

English Traveller.

BEFORE the interview with my father, the particulars of which have been already narrated, my chief source of anxiety had arisen from the dread of opposition on his part to my own resolute determination to become a soldier. That cause of apprehension had been now removed, and my mind was tranquillized by the knowledge, that in the attainment of this, the chief object of my wishes, I should have no further obstructions to overcome. My father, I was aware, had taken the necessary steps to procure me a commission, and I calmly waited the arrival of the moment, when I should be called from my retirement, to start forward in the high

career, for which I imagined myself to be destined. Time, too, which softens the human heart, and mitigates its fiercest passions, had not failed to exercise its salutary influence on mine. The bitterness of feeling, which the harsh and unkind conduct of my father had at first excited, gradually subsided. His health was bad; the objects dearest to him had been snatched away; he was a man of dilapidated fortunes and blighted hopes; and to these causes I was disposed to attribute much of that unfeeling moroseness by which his character was marked. His love I had never possessed, and I had long known it; of his strong aversion I *now* knew myself to be the object. Yet my heart was not formed long to be the depository of unkind feelings towards an only parent. There, indeed, my resentments had been stored; there I imagined them to be safely treasured; but when I endeavoured to recall them,—they were gone. The perusal of my mother's letter, too, again did much. It was ever carried in my bosom, and when I looked on it, I felt a relenting of the spirit, and the injustice of my father was forgiven.

In the establishment at Thornhill, the death of my mother had created a void not easily to be supplied. She had in fact been, as it were, the mainspring of the machine, by which each separate part was indirectly impelled and regulated. The superintendence of all domestic arrangements, and the education of my sisters, had been her peculiar provinces, and in these her loss was irreparable. Jane was now sixteen, and, under the tuition of her mother, had almost grown up into an elegant and accomplished woman. In point of acquirement, she was perfectly qualified to conduct the education of her younger sister; but it was perhaps scarcely reasonable to expect, in a girl of her age, the steadiness and energy of character necessary for such a task. To maintain a constant control over little Lucy, indeed, was no easy matter. Never was there a creature of gayer and more buoyant spirit.

She was as sportive as the fawn,
That, wild with glee, across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs.

No shadow lingered in her path, and she went on, rejoicing in the wild revelry of her own innocent and happy heart.

Jane's health, too, was delicate ; she was a creature too fragile to bear a heavy burden, and the new duties which were about to devolve on her, as the future mistress of the establishment at Thornhill, would, to one so young and inexperienced, be of themselves sufficient, without the addition of those necessarily allied to the education of her sister.

It was, however, not without mixed feelings of surprise and regret on our part, that my father, after perusing a letter one morning at the breakfast-table, informed us that we might expect in a few days the arrival of a lady, who was to form a permanent addition to our domestic circle. She was, he said, a person of good family, amiable and accomplished, intended to fill the double role of companion to Jane, and governess to little Lucy. The anticipation of such an addition to our family party, was at first by no means pleasant. But, on more mature consideration, I felt inclined to admit the propriety of the step taken by my father. Jane's spirits were variable, and required occasionally a degree of support, which neither my father nor Lucy, though from different causes, were

capable of affording. In the society of a person of her own sex, this alone could be found ; and I could not, on reflection, disapprove of an arrangement, which, if my father's statement might be believed, provided her with a companion in every respect eligible.

I remember one day, about the time when my sisters were anxiously expecting the arrival of this new inmate, with mingled feelings of dread and curiosity, I had just returned from a ride, and was dismounting from my horse, when a post-chaise drove up to the door. The vehicle seemed loaded externally with an unusual quantity of luggage, for the commodious conveyance of which it seemed ill calculated. An enormous black-leather trunk was fastened to the back part of the carriage by a voluminous complexity of rope, the summit was crowned by a gigantic band-box, and in front of the vehicle, the driver, instead of a dickey, was seated on a trunk, which seemed from its dimensions twin-brother to that behind. To catch a glimpse of the person who was the owner of so much worldly possession, was impossible, for nothing in the inside of the carriage was discernible but a confused mass of

baskets, bonnet-boxes, and other appurtenances of a female traveller. The door of this uncomfortable receptacle, however, at length opened, and, after a world of miscellaneous articles had been removed by the united activity of the servants and the driver, to my infinite astonishment, I beheld descend from the vehicle—Miss Cumberbatch. This circumstance was so unexpected, that I at first imagined she was merely the bearer of some message from Lady Amersham ; but a second glance at the confused multitude of packages which half filled the hall, most of which were addressed, in large characters, to “ Miss Cumberbatch, Thornhill Park,” convinced me she was the true Amphytrion, the real and genuine governess, of whose arrival we were in expectation. I approached her, therefore, and claiming the privilege of former acquaintance, begged to be allowed the pleasure of conducting her to my sisters’ apartment, and introducing her to them. My offer was, of course, politely accepted, and the duties it imposed on me duly discharged. The eyes both of Jane and Lucy were naturally directed with some anxiety towards a person on whose cha-

racter and qualities so much of their future comfort was likely to depend. The latter, I observed, eyed her askance. To her she came in the character of a governess, and the *à priori* ideas she had formed of the duties attached to that office, seemed by no means to prepossess her in favour of the person by whom it was to be filled. But the scrutiny of deeper physiognomists than either Jane or Lucy might have been baffled by the countenance of Miss Cumberbatch. It seemed the face of one long a stranger to strong emotion of any kind ; whose passions, whatever they had been, were become torpid through continued inaction. But whether this unruffled placidity was the gift of art or nature, whether it was transient or unchangeable, it might have puzzled Lavater himself to determine. Her deportment, however, was in all respects marked by strict propriety ; her manners, if not prepossessing, were at least far from repulsive ; and even the prejudices of little Lucy gradually gave way, when she found her governess was not *quite* so disagreeable as she had expected. In fact, there was nothing in her external appearance to provoke either ridicule

or dislike. Jane, too, was pleased with her new companion, and even the half aversion with which she had inspired me at Staunton Court, gave place to more kindly feelings. In short, after the arrival of Miss Cumberbatch, everything went on at Thornhill, if possible, more smoothly than before.

It may be as well, once for all, to inform the reader how Miss Cumberbatch came to make her appearance so unexpectedly in the circumstances already described. The truth was, my father had written to Lady Amersham, requesting her Ladyship's assistance in the weighty matter of procuring a person requisitely gifted for the situation. Lady Amersham, perhaps not averse to get thus easily rid of a dependent, for whose services she had little further occasion, or, to adopt a more charitable supposition, really believing Miss Cumberbatch to be well qualified to discharge the necessary duties, had recommended that lady to my father in the strongest terms. The latter did not hesitate in offering her an advantageous engagement, and Miss Cumberbatch arrived safely and in due season, with bag and baggage as before described.

My narrative has now reached a point, when I am called upon to record events of a somewhat different character, from any which have yet found place in these Memoirs. I would they might be omitted, but it cannot be; their recollection is too darkly and deeply interwoven with my story to be passed over in silence.

I have already said that in the walks of my sisters I was generally their companion. These were frequently directed to a cottage in the neighbourhood, of which there was apparently no other inhabitant than a young and beautiful girl, whom Jane occasionally employed in little works of embroidery and needle-work. In appearance and manners, she was certainly considerably above the common order of cottagers' daughters, and there was a settled melancholy on her countenance, evidently not its natural expression, which could not be regarded, or at least on my part certainly was not regarded, without compassion. The gloom and depression under which she laboured, were clearly not constitutional, for the gleams of a spirit naturally light and joyous, broke occasionally forth, and, like those of a winter's sun, seemed brighter

by contrast, with the heaviness and obscurity by which they were preceded and followed. But Mary Brookes (for such was her name) did not dwell in the cottage alone. She lived with her father, a rude and violent man, of whose character report did not speak very favourably in the neighbourhood. Isaac Brookes was sprung of respectable parents, and had commenced life in a station somewhat above that which he now occupied. He had been a farmer, but he was an imprudent man, given to irregular habits, and had not thriven in the world. His stock was distrained for rent, and he was ejected from his farm. Henceforward his hand was raised against every one, and the hand of every one was raised against Isaac Brookes. In this contest, as might be expected, he had come off worst. Many were the bruises and buffetings he had to endure, and he endured them with bitterness of heart, and a reckless spirit. In his more prosperous days he had married, and his wife, it was said, had fallen a victim to his harshness and brutality. She died, and left him the father of a daughter. Willing to be relieved of such a burden, Isaac

had consigned her to the care of his wife's sister, who reared the infant, and loved her as her own child. This aunt had been for many years a housekeeper in a nobleman's family, and when unfitted by the infirmities of age for further service, had retired to a neighbouring cottage, and passed the days of her declining life in comfort, on a pension allowed her by her former master. By her had Mary Brookes been instructed in all this aged matron was qualified to teach; and the accomplishments which she thus acquired, were the objects of envy and admiration to the village maidens. When on the verge of womanhood she had lost her kind protectress. Her pension ceased at her death, and Mary was obliged to seek a home in the cottage of her father. It was indeed a home
• very different from the one she quitted. Isaac Brookes was still a widower, and his temper had become ferocious from poverty and disappointment. Deprived of all the comforts to which she had hitherto been accustomed, and treated by her father with cruelty and neglect, it is not to be wondered, that her spirits sunk under a change of circumstances so sudden and

severe. Her sorrow, though deep, was silent and unobtrusive; if she wept, her tears were shed when no eye beheld them; if she sighed, it was in the solitary desolation of her heart, when there was no human ear to listen.

Such was the situation of Mary Brookes, when, with my sisters, I first visited her father's cottage. A creature more interesting it is difficult to conceive. Her figure was tall, and its natural grace was perhaps rendered more remarkable by the simplicity of her dress, and the air of retiring modesty visible in every look and gesture. Her face was pale, but when she spoke there was a suffusion in her cheek, as if the sound of her own sweet voice had made her fearful—

“ A maiden never bold
Of spirit—so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at itself.”

To me she seemed a being, whom, to gaze upon, was necessarily to love, who would find sympathy in every heart, and support in every arm. But it was not so. The punishment of the father had been extended to the daughter, and she was friendless. Who would show kindness

or protection to the daughter of Isaac Brookes? To whom could she look for comfort or support in her sufferings and trials? To none. The superiority of attraction she possessed rendered her an object of dislike to the mothers, and of jealousy to the daughters; for it is always peculiarly galling to be excelled by the unfortunate. From my sisters, it is true, she received all the kindness and consolation which they were prompted by their own feeling hearts to bestow. And I too,—think of the beauty and distress of this fair creature—of her meekness in suffering—of her fragile frame gradually sinking under the heavy burden that was laid upon her, and think whether every generous impulse of my soul was not awakened in her behalf. Alas for poor human nature, that the indulgence of even our best and purest feelings should lead but to guilt and error!

In the company of Jane and Lucy, I paid several visits to the cottage of Isaac Brookes. Of him we saw nothing, for he uniformly left home in the morning, and never returned till night; and Mary was left sad and solitary the live-long day, to the cheerless task of lace-making or em-

broidery. The strength of the spells she had cast around me daily increased; her image haunted me by night and by day, yet never was the thought of injuring a creature, so innocent and defenceless, even for one instant harboured in my soul. No, in all my dreams, and they were wild and countless, the Searcher of hearts knows that

“ I never tempted her with word too large ;
But, as a brother to a sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.”

One day I visited the cottage alone, charged with a message from Jane, and I found Mary seated as usual at her work; but her eyes were heavy and bloodshot, and she was evidently under the influence of deep depression. There was nothing in the circumstances of my visit to alarm the most scrupulous delicacy, far less to excite apprehension in one so simple and confiding as this poor girl. She saw—she could not but see—that I was deeply interested by her distress, nay, that could the pouring out of my blood have contributed to restore her to happiness, it would have been shed as water. Poor Mary! her heart leaped up within her at the voice of kind-

ness, long a stranger to her ear ; and while she listened to the words of pity and of comfort with which I sought to soothe her,

“ She could not bear their gentleness,
The tears were in their bed.”

Most true is the old adage, that pity is akin to love. The stream of one passion flows into another so imperceptibly, that the point of union cannot be discovered, and we glide onwards with the current, insensible alike of our own progress, and of the direction in which we are carried, till we strike on some sunken rock, and are left perhaps to float a shattered wreck upon the waters.

Day after day were my steps directed to the cottage, and anxiously did Mary watch in her innocence and simplicity for the accustomed hour, when her solitude would be cheered by my presence, her heart gladdened by my voice. From her own lips I listened to the story of her griefs. She told me her father pressed her to a hateful marriage with a gamekeeper on a neighbouring estate, a rude and violent man, whom she detested. That on her acceptance of his addresses

depended her father's safety and continuance in this country; for, on this condition alone, had Pierce agreed to quash a prosecution for poaching, in which conviction was certain. Her tears flowed fast as she spoke, for her heart was torn by conflicting emotions. By a sudden impulse I caught her in my arms, and kissed the moisture from her cheeks, which in an instant glowed like crimson. She started back from my embrace with the offended dignity of maiden modesty, and I knelt down, and, invoking God to witness the purity of my intentions, vowed to guard and to protect her with a brother's love. And thus her fears were calmed; but alas, from that moment our fate was sealed.

The frequency of my visits to Brookes's cottage afforded, as might be expected, matter for village gossip, too interesting to be overlooked, and it became necessary that our interviews should be arranged with secrecy and caution. The heart of every woman tells her, almost instinctively, of the close affinity between guilt and concealment, and that of Mary shrank from it with fear and trembling. But she was young, inexperienced, and, above all—she loved. Our

place of rendezvous was the tower on the hill already mentioned, and there we met at midnight, in silence and secrecy. Night after night these visits were repeated, and there did we linger till the dawn of morning-twilight gave the signal for departure. The Being who alone knew our weakness, knows likewise with what purity of purpose we trode the brink of the precipice to which our steps had brought us. Need I go on? The tale of guilty love, of hearts alike deceiving and deceived, has been often told. We were but weak and erring creatures—at length caution slept—Mary ceased to be virtuous—and the reproaches of my own heart told me I was a seducer.

CHAPTER XIX.

Oh, County Guy, the hour is nigh—
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea ;
The lark, his lay who trill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner by ;
Breeze, bird, and flower, they know the hour—
But where is County Guy ?

Quentin Durward.

ON the night following I was again at the tower, but the hour of tryste passed, and Mary came not. It was a moonless summer's night, and the air was sultry and oppressive. For long hours did I sit watching for the sound of her footsteps, in the path that wound along the hillside, and start at every rustling of the leaves made by the fox, as he stole through the bushes towards his earth in the furze cover,—but Mary came not, and the night passed in solitude and sadness. I lingered till the day at length dawned ; and the song of the birds that

came forth to carol their sweet matins in the sunrise, warned me that my hopes were vain, and I sought my pillow with worn spirits and an anxious bosom. My dreams were wild and dreary, and I woke only to encounter the fierce upbraidings of offended conscience. A lovely, friendless, innocent, and defenceless creature had trusted herself to my honour and protection, and I had plunged her in irretrievable ruin. What need was there to add new and more intolerable anguish to the griefs of one already desolate and oppressed? Why select as a victim, the most innocent, the most confiding, the most unhappy of her sex? In vain did I attempt to "lull the still small voice," by pleading that I too had fallen unwarily into the snare. The pitfall was not dug in my path—I had sought it—I had voluntarily courted the temptation under which I fell. Had I not sworn, and called on the Deity to witness my truth, to love her but with a brother's love, and to guard her honour stainless and immaculate? She had trusted me. To her innocent and unsuspecting heart, my promises had been as those of gospel truth. She had clung to them with woman's

faith. In them she had embarked all that belonged to her in this world, her innocence—and she had been betrayed. What was it now to say, that I had over-rated my strength, or to deplore the fatal consequences of my ungoverned passions? Are not the consequences of his guilt lamented even by the most selfish and hardened sinner, when the enjoyments it afforded him are past? But what could avail regret, however bitter? The victim had fallen—the altar had been desecrated by the sacrifice, and the immolation of innocence had been completed. “Vile seducer! unprincipled betrayer of confiding love! Like Cain, shalt thou be branded among men, and go down into the grave with the guilt of perjury on thy soul.” Never till now had I felt the bitterness of an upbraiding conscience, and it goaded me to the quick. There is no extremity of bodily suffering I would not have preferred to the mental agonies I then endured. I strove to escape from my own reflections, but could not—like the wretch, who feels in his quivering flesh the flames by which he is surrounded, and attempts escape in vain, for he is chained to the stake.

And Mary too, where was she? Might she not have been driven to some act of despair, and might not even the guilt of murder be added to my already dark catalogue of crimes! Was I not once more to see, and comfort her, to join my tears with hers, to tell her how much her very weakness had endeared her to my heart? I was indeed full of anxiety on her account, but I feared to venture to the cottage, for I knew my visits there were watched, and guilt is ever full of many fears. My steps were directed, therefore, to a part of the park, from which it was overlooked, and there did I sit for hours gazing on its thatched roof, and the little garden that lay between it and the road, neglected and full of weeds. The sun had gone down ere I quitted my station. No living being had approached the house, no smoke rose from its chimney top—it seemed tenantless and deserted. Sick of soul, did I return to Thornhill; I shrank from society—the caresses even of little Lucy were become hateful and distressing. I pushed her rudely from me, and while the tears started up into her large and blue eyes at my unkindness, I retired to solitude and suffering,

in my own apartment. Night came, and the stars again saw me at my watch-tower on the hill-top. They rose and disappeared, but Mary's footstep had not gladdened my ear, nor her tall and slender form delighted my eye. Heavily did the sun appear that morn to raise his disk above the dark curtain of the clouds, and less than usually jocund, methought, was the jubilee of living nature in his return. I did not return home, but roamed onward through the woods, and selecting the path that led to where the shadow of the dark green pines was deepest and least pervious, I cast myself on the ground, and listened to the melancholy sound of the waterfall, that ascended from the glen. It was noon ere I reached Thornhill; a letter had come for me by the post, and I knew it was from Mary. I thrust it hastily into my bosom, rushed up stairs to my apartment, and having secured my chamber-door from the possibility of intrusion, I opened it with a trembling heart. It was indeed from Mary, and gave melancholy evidence that her spirit, which till now had borne up against sorrow and misfortune, was at length broken. It contained no reproaches, she up-

braided me not with my broken faith. She had foolishly, she said,—almost wickedly loved, where love was hopeless, and a dreadful punishment had followed her offence. She said that all thought of happiness had fled for ever, and she now knew herself to be a creature alike alienated from God, and despised by man. She told me, too, that her father now treated her with more harshness and cruelty than ever; that he even threatened her life, if she refused to pay the price of his safety by marrying Pierce; and what could she do?—her heart was broken, and she knew not. She concluded by wishing me farewell for ever. We could never meet again. She had been guilty, but her nature would not suffer her to persist in guilt. Her love would cease only in the grave, it was mine unalienably, indefeasibly mine, yet she desired me to forget her. She was, she said, but a guilty, miserable, and worthless thing, unworthy of a thought, a weed tossed upon the waters, bound by no tie, and destined to be the sport of wind and waves. The letter was written with trembling fingers, and blotted with tears. Shall I attempt to describe the effect it produced on

me? No. The feelings of suffering that letter cost me shall still rest undisturbed in their sepulchre, nor shall the grave be called on unnecessarily to open its ponderous and marble jaws, and cast them up again.

Notwithstanding the expressed determination of Mary to see me no more, I felt it was necessary to my peace, that at least another interview should take place. I wrote her a letter of comfort; I accused myself as the sole cause of her misfortune; I assured her of my undiminished, my unchangeable attachment; I entreated her to quit her father's roof, and accept an asylum from me, and I made a solemn vow never to intrude myself unbidden on her presence. Lastly, I conjured her by the love she bore me, to see me once more, to grant me at least the melancholy consolation of bidding her an eternal farewell. I dispatched this letter by a sure channel, and with trembling anxiety awaited the answer. A day, and yet another day passed, and it came not. I could bear the tortures of suspense no longer, and determined at all events to seek an interview. Prudence had hitherto withheld me from visiting the cottage of her father, but my

mind was now in too high a state of excitement, to think of prudence. There, therefore, I resolved to seek her. And I did so. My heart beat almost audibly, as I approached the cottage. I lifted the latch, and listened for a moment to catch if possible some signal that the house was still tenanted by her so dear to me. No sound but the monotonous ticking of a clock broke the silence of the dwelling. I advanced slowly and on tiptoe, and through a half-opened door I beheld Mary, with her head bent forward to the table, and her face covered with her hands. A basket with her work lay beside her, but it was evidently untouched. I saw before me the creature whom I had ruined and betrayed; my heart was moved with something of awe and fear, and I almost dreaded to approach. For a moment or two I stood irresolute, and then I called her by her name. Quick as lightning she started up, and gazing on me with a look of wildness, exclaimed, "Oh, why have you come? God help me, my misery needed not this."

"Yes, God will help you, dearest Mary," said I; "let not your heart be cast down; accept shelter and protection from one, who would

peril body, nay soul, in your defence." She sank back into her chair as I spoke, and I advanced and knelt before her. "Pardon, pardon the wretch who has betrayed you—mine was the guilt, not yours. Spare your self-reproaches, accuse him who is alone guilty, and who now sues for that pardon from you, which his own conscience can never grant."

Mary's only reply was a loud shriek; quick and heavy steps were heard on the floor, and, turning round, I beheld Isaac Brookes and Pierce the game-keeper. I was instantly on my feet, and turned to front the intruders. The face of Pierce was black as Erebus, and was marked, I thought, by an almost diabolical malignity. He had lowered the butt of the gun which he carried, to the ground, and he stood, with his arm resting on the muzzle, regarding me with a settled scowl. The face of Brookes, though of a different character, was equally marked by evil passion. Its first expression seemed to be one of unmingled fury; but that soon passed away, and his countenance assumed, as he approached me, a look of sardonic, or rather of malignant suavity, more unpleasant than un-

governed passion, because more difficult to deal with.

“Your servant, young squire,” said he, slightly touching his hat, “I thank you for your kindness to my daughter, and the care you seem to be taking of her ; but when your honour thinks of visiting her again, you had better let me know before you come ; because if you do not,” and his assumed mildness of expression was changed into a look of deadly determination, “it may hap that evil may come of it,” glancing a look at the same time on Pierce’s gun.

“I came, I assure you,” answered I, feeling all the awkwardness of my situation, but making an effort to conceal it, “I solemnly assure you, with no evil intentions towards either your daughter or yourself. My sisters are deeply interested for her, and I——”

“Thank them and you too,” interrupted Brookes ; “you are very kind and condescending, and I am grateful, as in duty bound. In return, take one word of advice from me, and that is, neither to write to my daughter,” and he produced at the same time my letter from his pocket, “nor to visit her for the future, if you

would live to inherit your father's estate. So, good morning to you, sir.—Come, Mary, why don't you wish the gentleman farewell, that's been so kind to you?—Good morning to you, sir, and I recommend you to think on my advice."

I left the cottage immediately, and as I passed the door, a peal of hellish laughter from within sounded in my ears.

Baffled in all my hopes, I returned home in no very enviable frame of mind. By my imprudence I had aggravated Mary's misfortunes, and exposed her to ignominy and obloquy. Her father, it was evident, was aware of our correspondence, and was thus furnished with an instrument of fearful power to bend his unhappy daughter to his wishes. I would have periled everything to protect her from the tyranny and violence of her brutal parent. But what *could* I do? Every avenue of communication between us was closed. If I approached the cottage, my steps were watched; if I wrote, my letter would probably be again intercepted by her father; and to incur detection in either case, what was it but to draw down on Mary's head persecution

yet more severe, and add new dangers and difficulties to the labyrinth of those in which she was already lost. Now, indeed, all the fearful consequences of my crime were opened to my view. I beheld, in all its extent, the dark and dreary gulf into which, on the stream of passion, we had floated. I saw Mary perishing in the waters, and yet was unable to rescue or assist her.—Such were my first lessons in morality, and they were bitter and severe.

My grief was now of that passive nature which requires only patient endurance, and calls into action none of the more active energies in our nature. It was deep, not vehement ; fixed, not loud ; and experience tells me that such grief is more difficult to bear, than that which comes suddenly, and like a torrent, upon the heart ; which

“ Flows like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide ;”

and which, sweeping down with the rapidity and desolation of a whirlwind, like a whirlwind also passes away. I felt no longer a satisfaction in the solitary indulgence of sorrow, but once more sought society, and strove to extract from

it, the only solace that remained for me—the power to *forget*. My sisters were engaged to pay a visit of some duration to a neighbouring family, and I agreed to accompany them. I was absent about a month, and during that period received no intelligence of Mary. Alas! had such intelligence never reached me, I had been comparatively happy, for I learned, on my return to Thornhill, she had become the wife of Pierce. And now did the whirlwind I have spoken of, rage in all its violence within me! I uttered curses and execrations on her father, on Pierce, on myself, nay, even on Mary. Why, I exclaimed in my impious frenzy, had this horrid and accursed deed been suffered by the great Ruler of the world? Why had he not blasted with his lightning the perpetrators of a crime so black and unparalleled? Were those lips that I had kissed—that bosom which had throbbed against my own, to be contaminated by the touch of a low and brutal barbarian? There was almost madness in the thought, and yet it was a thought I was compelled to endure. To flee from it was impossible; it haunted me like my shadow. I saw the look of conscious

triumph on the face of the vile minion, as he gazed upon his victim. I saw her flesh creep as he approached, and she shrunk with a shudder from his touch. I could not go on. The picture was too horrible to be voluntarily contemplated ; and, to avoid it, I would have plunged into the crater of a volcano. But what was past could not be recalled, and submission to the necessary course of events, is in man not optional, but imperative.

Time passed, and my feelings gradually reverted to their former tone, and I regarded Mary, if possible, with even deeper compassion than before. We had been disjoined by an irreversible fiat, and yet I was loath to think that we had already separated for ever. In a short time I should bid farewell—certainly a long,—possibly an eternal farewell, to Thornhill ; and I felt I should depart with a lighter spirit, if I could meet Mary once more. The obstacles to such a meeting seemed almost insurmountable—it was even difficult to convey to her an intimation of my wishes. Project after project was considered and rejected, for the consequences of exciting the jealousy of Pierce were too se-

rious to allow me to adopt any plan which involved even the possibility of discovery. I had at length nearly given up the attempt in despair, when I learned that Pierce had gone to the county town to give evidence in several trials for poaching, and that his presence would be required there for several days. This circumstance was too favourable to my wishes not to be taken immediate advantage of. Pierce's cottage was about two miles off, situated on the estate of which he was keeper. On three sides it was surrounded by a wood, which skirted the little garden behind, and where that did not intervene, approached still more closely to the house. In this wood it was possible to lie concealed, and at the same time to command a view of everything that passed around the dwelling. Having arranged my plans, I wrote a letter to Mary, in which I told her of my approaching departure—that it was necessary to my happiness that I should learn whether there was anything in which I could contribute to her comfort and tranquillity; and above all, that I should receive from her own lips assurance of her forgiveness. I urged with all the eloquence I could

command, that in the memory of having thus parted with her in kindness, I could alone hope for consolation when far distant, and conjured her, standing on the verge, as we did, of an eternal separation, not to deny this last, this parting request, to one whom she had once loved, who still loved her. My letter likewise indicated the hour and place of meeting on the following night, and if she agreed to this arrangement, I desired she would give signal of her consent by appearing at the window with a white handkerchief in her hand.

Before sunrise I was at my post, but the execution of my scheme was by no means easy. There were servants about the house, by whom it would have been ruin to be discovered. Of Mary I had only caught a few occasional glimpses as she happened to approach the window, and no opportunity occurred of attracting her observation. At length, however, she came forth into the garden, singing in a voice weak but exquisitely sweet, a song whose mournful cadences seemed breathed from a weary and a bursting heart. Every note of it sank deep into my soul. She had approached nearly to the extremity of

the garden, which opened by a small wicket into the wood, when I advanced, crouching as much as possible to avoid all chances of detection, and throwing the letter in her path, retreated hastily to my place of concealment. I feared the suddenness of the surprise might have caused her to scream, but it did not. When she saw the letter, she leant for support against a tree, as if suddenly bereft of strength, but soon recovering, she took it up, and I saw her return with tottering steps to the house. A long interval followed, which was passed by me in a state of restless anxiety. At length she approached the window, her eyes evidently swollen with weeping, and the white handkerchief was in her hand. She pressed it to her bosom and retired. I too, satisfied with the success of my mission, returned to Thornhill, screening myself as much as possible from observation, by directing my steps through the thickest and least frequented part of the wood.

During the remainder of the day my mind was restless and uneasy. Our interview would of necessity be a melancholy one, and I almost regretted having sought it. Mary, I thought,

was too weak to support the agitation it must necessarily occasion ; and the motives which had induced me almost to force it upon her, I feared were wrong and selfish. But the die was cast, and it was necessary now to stand its hazard ; and when night closed in I was on my way to the place of meeting. It was a field distant about a quarter of a mile from Pierce's cottage, in the middle of which stood a group of chestnut-trees of uncommon size and luxuriance, and which, from this circumstance, was distinguished among the country people as " the field of the Five Chestnuts." It was a green and sunny spot ; such a one as the passer-by might pause to gaze upon, before he plunged once more into the dark shadows of the surrounding wood. Here and there a large tuft of broom glittered like a mass of molten gold ; but I need not describe it, for after all, it was nothing more than a pretty field, such as one may meet almost anywhere. Why I had selected it as a place of meeting I know not ; but here it was, beneath the shadow of the chestnut-trees, that Mary and I were once more to meet, and bid each other an eternal farewell. When I reached the ap-

pointed place, my watch informed me that the hour of meeting was not yet come, and throwing myself on the ground, I endeavoured, both for Mary's sake and my own, to acquire fortitude and self-command sufficient to enable me to pass calmly through the approaching trial. The spot where I lay was too much sheltered for the wind to reach it; but the swiftness with which the clouds travelled in the sky, showed its influence to be powerful above. One moment a mass of heavy clouds veiled the moon, and the earth was covered with the curtain of darkness. Anon, they had passed away, and the glorious planet again shone forth in all her brightness. Such was the night, but my observations on the firmament were cut short, by perceiving that my watch already indicated the hour of meeting to have come. I started up, and taking advantage of the glimpses of the moon, whenever in queenly royalty she came forth from her canopy of clouds, gazed anxiously around to watch for the approach of Mary. At length I saw a female figure at some distance, emerging from the wood. It was she—it was my once pure and innocent,—my still beautiful Mary. With

the swiftness of a greyhound loosed from his leash, I sprung to meet her. In a moment I was by her side—my arms were extended to fold her once more to my bosom, when the report of a gun was heard, and at the same instant I felt myself wounded. A bullet had passed through my shoulder—I staggered backward a few paces and fell.

The circumstance of being shot, always produces a considerable confusion in a man's ideas. I have no very clear remembrance of what passed around me, as I lay on the ground. But a shriek, loud and piercing as ever gave expression to human anguish, yet seems to tingle in my ear, when I revert to that moment. Then I heard curses horrible and blasphemous, uttered in a harsh and dreadful voice; but these became gradually weaker, till they were at length lost in the distance, and all was silent.

By degrees I became more clear and collected, and felt desirous, for the night-air now seemed damp and chill, to return as soon as possible, and procure surgical assistance for my wound. I rose, though with some difficulty, for my loss of blood had been considerable; and, stanching

the wound with my handkerchief as well as circumstances would permit, directed my steps to the neighbouring village, which had the advantage of including in its population a professor of the healing art. I was weak and faint, and my progress was slow ; but I at length succeeded in reaching the doctor's house, and, with somewhat more difficulty, in knocking up the doctor from his comfortable bed. He came rubbing his eyes, and still apparently half asleep.

“Hey—what—Mr Thornton !—bleeding too !—gun-shot wound ;—not in the thorax or abdomen, I hope—vitals safe, and no matter for the wings—Is this murder, or robbery, or an affair of honour ? Sit down, my good sir, and let me examine the course of the ball.—Morgan, fetch my instruments, and the tourniquet in the left-hand drawer of my anatomical cabinet.”

The doctor, as the reader will perceive, was a loquacious man, and I had no inclination either to share his loquacity, or become the subject of it. I therefore requested he would dress my wound without further colloquy, and desired that nobody might be present in the room when he did so. Morgan was therefore dismiss-

ed; and my wound, having been duly probed and examined, was pronounced, in military phrase, to be severe, not dangerous. The necessary dressings and ligatures were applied, and after many assurances that I had made a narrow escape, the bullet having passed between the coracoid process and the scapula, luckily without injuring either, the doctor's gig was ordered out to convey me to Thornhill. On the way thither, I informed him that it was necessary the circumstance of my being wounded should remain secret, and that my illness should be attributed by my family to a severe injury occasioned by a fall from my horse. In case he consented to these conditions, well; if not, I should be under the necessity of employing another practitioner. To this alternative, however, I was not reduced by the doctor's obstinacy. He objected, indeed, to committing his character by telling a direct lie, but he had no objection to furnish indirect corroboration to any statement of mine, however much at variance with the fact. This was enough. Our consciences dove-tailed into each other admirably. I told my own story, the doctor supported

it, and it passed current without question or suspicion.

On reaching Thornhill, I was ordered to bed. The exhaustion consequent on loss of blood had been succeeded by a state of feverish excitement, which my conversation with the doctor, and the necessity of arranging some project of concealment, had probably increased. My arrival in such a condition, and stained with blood almost from top to toe, of course created, in the phraseology of the present day, "a great sensation" in the family. Old Jacob Pearson stood aghast when he beheld me, and the alarm of Jane and Lucy was strong, and difficult to be calmed. Even my father, on learning the condition in which I had been brought home, was moved to the display of some share of parental feeling.

My recovery was slow, and my confinement tedious. Everything sisterly love could do to relieve the ennui of a sick-bed, was done, but done in vain. Jane could not now, as formerly, be the confidante of all my thoughts and feelings; secrets impossible to be disclosed weighed heavily on my mind; it bent beneath a burden

which could not be lightened or participated, and of which time alone could diminish the oppression. To my sisters I was neither unkind nor ungrateful ; I loved them dearly as before ; but I felt, and I believe Jane too felt, that the charm which openness of heart had before given to our intercourse was gone. Happy, at least comparatively happy was I, when I could withdraw my thoughts from the past, and fix them on that paradise of fools, the future. Sad and painful remembrances seemed indissolubly linked with every object around me, and the thirsty Hart pants not more ardently for the clear brook, than I did for the arrival of the expected moment, when I should bid a long farewell to my parental mansion. I counted the days,—almost the hours, till it arrived, and to me they seemed an exhaustless calendar. Yet “time and the hour” sped on, and the moment of anticipated happiness came at last.

My wound had healed, and I was again convalescent, when I once more received a summons to attend my father in the library ; and never was mandate obeyed with greater alacrity. On my entrance, he pointed to a newspaper on

the table, and said : “ You will find in the Gazette a notification of your appointment to an Ensigny in the —— regiment of foot. You would have preferred, no doubt, a commission in the Guards or the Dragoons ; but, in your circumstances, I have not deemed it prudent or fair to expose you to unnecessary temptation. Remember you have not become a soldier, like many young men of fortune whom you will meet with in the world, merely for the sake of wearing a handsome uniform, or passing a few years in pleasant society. No. The army must be to you a *profession*, not an amusement ; and it is by your success or failure in that, you must expect to sink or swim. In future, trust only to yourself, for from this hour you are your own master. Do not think I am your enemy. You will carry with you my warmest prayers for your success, and whatever I can do to advance your interests will be done cheerfully. With advice I will not trouble you. From any act of dishonour, the blood that flows in your veins will preserve you ; and to avoid acts of folly and imprudence, it is necessary to taste the punishment that follows them. It is the price paid for

the lessons of experience that in fact constitutes their value ; cheapen them, and they are worthless. Depart as soon as may be. Life is too short to be unnecessarily wasted in idleness and inaction. When you come of age, the fortune you are entitled to claim by settlement, will be paid you ; till then, you shall have a credit on my banker for all suitable expenses. Go to London, and make the necessary preparations for joining your regiment, which is in America. Write often to your sisters—it will give me pleasure to hear of you through them. Farewell.”

Cold as this may appear, when considered as the parting address of a father to an only son, I was yet moved by the tone of unusual kindness in which it was spoken. My heart was softened, and when he extended his hand, I grasped it between mine, and bathed it with my tears. It seemed as if I were now parting for ever with my only remaining parent.

“ Father,” I said, “ send me not forth into the world without your blessing.”

“ It is yours. May God bless and protect you.”

He withdrew his hand, and left the apartment. My journey required few preparations, and these were soon made. On the following morning, I pressed my weeping sisters in my arms,—imprinted a parting kiss upon their lips, and bade adieu to Thornhill.

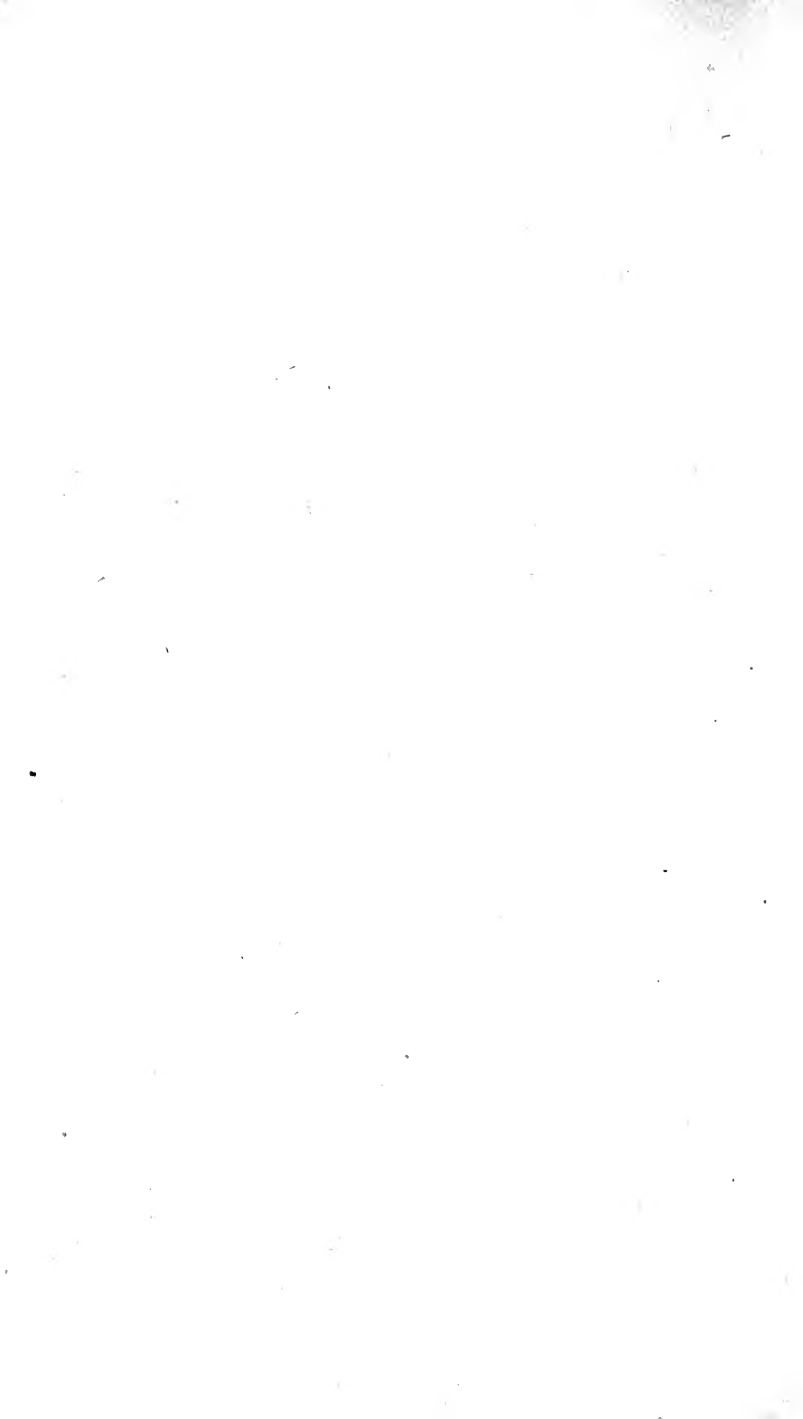
Of Mary Brookes I saw, I heard no more ; but I have since learned that she died soon after my departure. When I returned to Thornhill several years afterwards, I wished to shed a tear on her grave. But there was no stone to mark its site ;—the sexton knew it not,—Mary and her grave were alike forgotten.

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